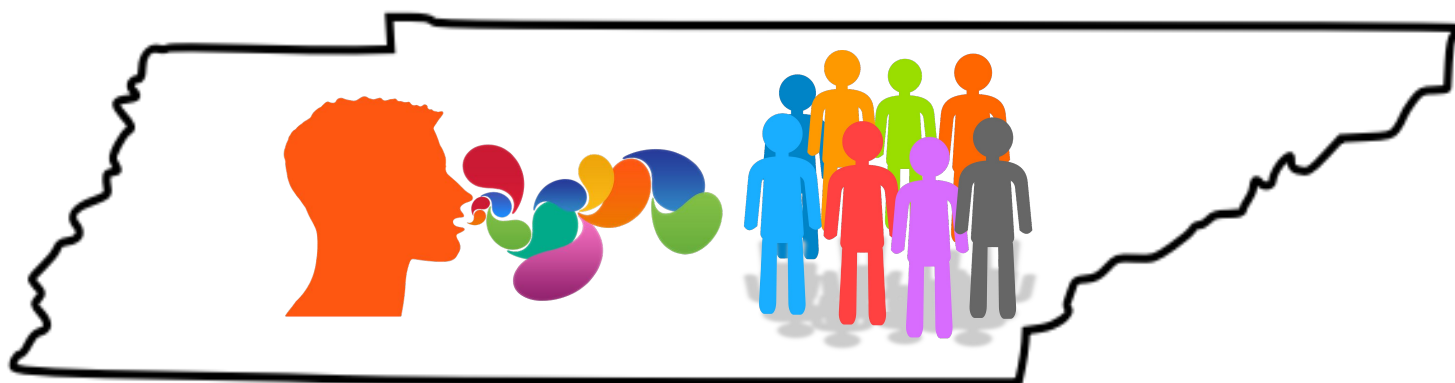


The Aphasia Group of Middle Tennessee: How It Works

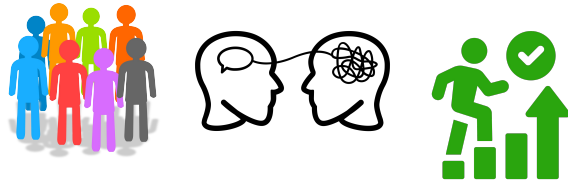


by Deborah F. Levy, Anna V. Kasdan, Katherine M. Bryan, Stephen
Wilson, Michael de Riesthal, and Dominique P. Herrington

An accessible version of
“Designing and implementing a community aphasia group:
An illustrative case study of the Aphasia Group of Middle
Tennessee”

Abstract / Summary



- Aphasia Groups help people with aphasia



- In Tennessee, we have had an Aphasia Group for a long time

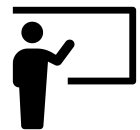


- Here, we share:

- How our group works 
- What people like about it 

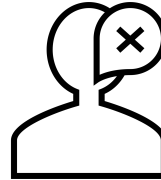
- We want to:

- Teach people about Aphasia Groups
- Help other groups get started



Introduction

- Aphasia means having trouble with language after a brain injury



- Aphasia can make people feel sad, lonely, and isolated

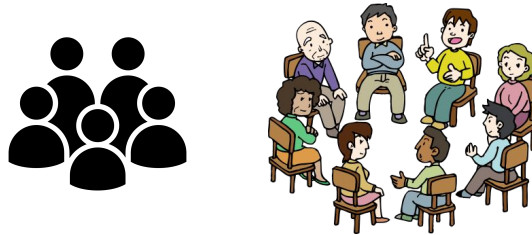


- Speech therapy doesn't always help with those sad, lonely feelings



Introduction

- Aphasia Groups are places where people with aphasia come together



- Aphasia Groups can help people feel happy, supported, and confident



Introduction

- Not all places have an Aphasia Group



- People do not write much about Aphasia Groups



- It can be hard to know:

- What an Aphasia Group is
- How to start an Aphasia Group



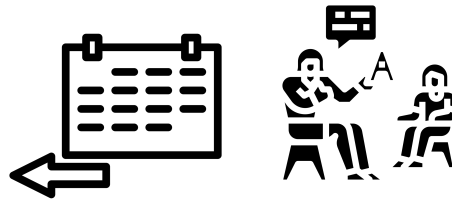
Introduction


- We are writing about our Aphasia Group to teach people who want to know more!
- Our group is called the Aphasia Group of Middle Tennessee
 - Here, we'll call it **AGoMT**



History


- AGoMT was started in 2004 by Dominique P. Herrington, a speech-language pathologist



- AGoMT meets at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee 
- AGoMT by the numbers:
 - **17** years
 - **140** members total
 - **20** members per year

Philosophy

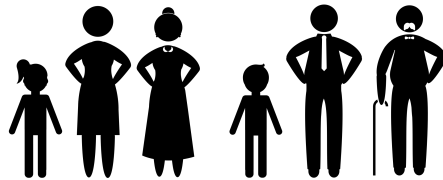
- AGoMT uses the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia (LPAA), with these goals:

- To participate in life 
- To communicate in a way that works

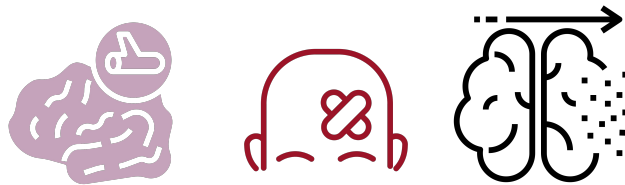


- All are welcome!

- All ages



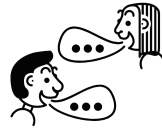
- All types and causes of aphasia



Philosophy

- AGoMT is...

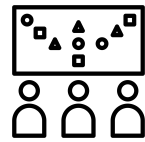
- A place for members to practice talking



- A place for students to learn about aphasia



- Group members both learn and teach



- AGoMT is affordable



Helpers

- Students and loved ones might help out



- Before meeting group members, students watch videos and practice with each other



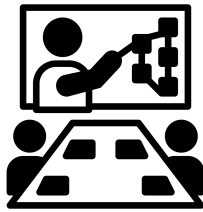
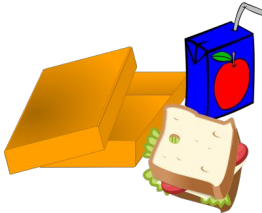



- Group leader Dominique meets with students each week



- Family and friends can join for part of the day



Schedule: Before COVID-19

- 9:30 - 10:00 : Coffee talk 
- 10:00 – 11:00 : Work with a student
(Partners in Communication) 
- 11:00 - 11:55 : Executive group 
- 11:55 - 12:50 : Lunch 
- 1:00 – 1:45 : Book club 
- 1:45 – 2:45 : Current Events 
- 2:45 – 4:00 : Big Group 

Schedule: During COVID-19

- Group meetings happen on Zoom
- Similar activities throughout the week



- Current Events



- Book Club



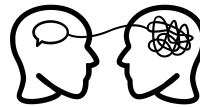
- Big Group



Survey: Why do members like group?

- We asked:

- 10 people with aphasia



- 7 loved ones (family, friends)



- Surveys happened over Zoom and by mail



Group members say...

- AGoMT makes them feel very good



- AGoMT helps them feel like themselves



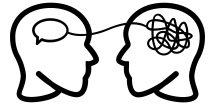
- AGoMT helps them feel less lonely and isolated



Group members say...

- Best things about group:

- Meeting others with aphasia



- Using technology



- Improving language



- Getting out of the house



Group members say...

- Favorite activities in group:

- Book Club



- Current Events



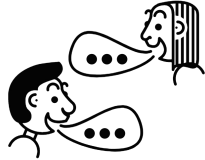
- Coffee Talk



Group members say...

- Most helped by group:

- Talking



- Using technology



- Understanding



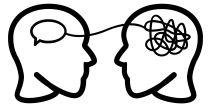
Group member quotes

- “I **needed all of it...I used it everywhere...**For me to be able to talk, that was a big deal for me.”
- “Really, it...wow, **amazing. Joyful, happy.** All the time.”
- “It gets me out of the house. I come home and **feel really good. I love it...**just being around there talking, there’s not people that are looking at you because you can’t get the words out. There’s nobody looking at you funny.”



Loved ones say...

- AGoMT helps group member with aphasia
- AGoMT helps them personally
- AGoMT helps with caring for group member



Loved ones say...

- Most helped by group:

- Talking 
- Understanding 
- Mood 
- Motivation 
- Social life 

Loved ones say...

- Most useful activities:

- Current Events



- Partners in Communication



- Book Club



- Big Group



Loved ones quotes

- “He saw how others with the same deficits made **progress** and [it] **gave him hope** for himself.”
- “Aphasia Group is a place [my loved one] can be **included** and **understood**. He’s welcomed as he is and for that we are grateful!”
- “Aphasia Group helped my loved one become **more confident** in trying to **communicate**, **helped with his socialization**, and **improved his mood and outlook on life**.”

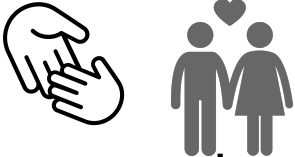



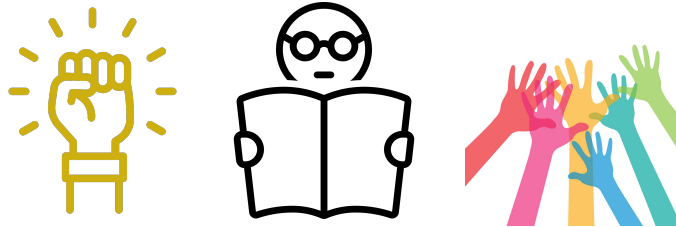
Loved ones quotes

- “I have **learned SO much!** First we’re not on this journey alone. Dominique and ALL the students we’ve met have been very **gracious** in explaining the best way to communicate with [my loved one] and trying different methods.”
- “Aphasia Group positively impacted my life by giving me respite, and it **improved my loved one’s life therefore improving mine.**”



Summary

- AGoMT is valuable to members and their loved ones 
- Other papers show the same thing about other groups 
- It is important that people with aphasia can read about aphasia groups themselves
 - That's why we included this version!



Things to think about...

- What if, because of who answered, our survey makes group seem better than it is?
 - We think that's not true, because...
 - People stay in group for a long time
 - The group size stays very big



- What if we didn't ask enough people?
 - We think that's not true, because most Aphasia Groups are small



- What if other groups can't afford what we can?
 - We hope others can still use this as a guide!



Conclusion

- AGoMT is an aphasia group “success story”!

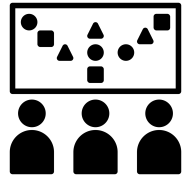


- Group members and their loved ones love it!



- We hope...

- Other groups will learn from our group



- People with aphasia will feel empowered to learn about aphasia groups themselves!

