

## **Supplemental Material S1. Descriptions of BRAC groups.**

All groups at Brooks Rehabilitation Aphasia Center (BRAC) are open to anyone with aphasia. Different levels of support and material are offered to encourage contributions and ideas from all members. Trained speech language pathologists, graduate students and other professionals also serve as group facilitators. Members with aphasia often lead or assist groups. Group descriptions are provided below.

### **Book and Movie Club**

The Book and movie club is a group that helps to promote the love of a good story and reading. The members in this group choose three to five different books of interest and discuss each one. The book must have some type of visual/movie clips to support it. The group members vote and pick one book they all are interested in reading. The group facilitator provides two aphasia friendly versions of each book to the members - a challenging version and more supported version that has more visuals, simplified sentences and text modifications. The member chooses which version they want to use (Knollman-Porter et al., 2015).

Each week, the members read a few pages of the book aloud and volunteers from the group summarize each chapter and co-lead discussions. Many discussions focus on personal experiences, connections to the characters or events, and reactions to the overall story. Movie clips and visual modifications are used to increase comprehension (Elman & Bernstein-Ellis, 2006). Once the members complete the book, they watch the movie together and discuss the two versions, share their opinions, thoughts and reactions to both the movie, the book and the relevance to their own life.

### **Shark Tank Group**

BRAC created 'Shark Tank,' an innovative group that centers on a salient and meaningful narrative topic. This group, based on the entrepreneurial-themed reality TV show Shark Tank, provides members an opportunity to have functional discussions about products they could use at home. It also promotes discussion with family and friends about new products and ideas. Elman (2013) discusses the importance of reintegration back into real-life conversations and the community around us. BRAC members become empowered consumers about novel products after discussing them within the group.

In terms of logistics, the group votes on a product of interest from Shark Tank. The members are then given an aphasia-friendly summary sheet and visuals describing the product with basic information about the product and cost to produce. The actual video of the "pitch" of the product is then played for the group with closed captions. Facilitated conversation (with supports as needed) takes place with probe questions such as: Would you support or fund this product? How much would you be willing to pay for it? What could improve the product? Who should they market it to? What do they think the investors will do? What are the pros/cons of the product?

These questions are written out with accompanying pictures shown to support comprehension. The group votes with a final yes or no for the product, with members trying to persuade each other. The last step is to play the final decision from the Shark Tank judges and compare the judges' opinions with the group's decision.

## **Journaling**

The weekly journaling group aims to help people with aphasia use creative writing, storytelling and drawing to express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and expression. This group focuses on journaling using word banks, scripting, pictures, and drawing to document daily life thoughts and ideas. Members are initially given supports, picture dictionaries and scripts. They begin by journaling basic information such as date, weather and common phrases. As members become confident, they are shown how to use their phone to access weather apps and a calendar. The members start to add daily events, feelings, and funny stories from the week.

Word banks and brainstorming with drawings words or pictures on a large whiteboard are used to represent the topic/event. For example, if the topic for journaling was the fourth of July, members would take turns writing words, phrases or drawings to represent the topic. Examples include fireworks, picnic, independence, freedom, fun, beach, sparklers. Members then choose the words or drawings that are salient to them and create phrases or messages in their journal.

BRAC has designed an aphasia-friendly picture book to support journaling. The book includes items the members feel are most salient, such as: weather, events, places, family members and feelings. Many members choose to add motivational or inspirational thoughts, words of encouragement or quotes. They often discuss their entries with each other during other groups. Members are given the choice to take the journal home to write in it daily or leave it at the center and make weekly entries.

## **Ambassador Group**

The Brooks Rehabilitation Ambassador program is a member-driven program developed to empower members with aphasia through facilitating groups or projects, helping support other people with aphasia at the center and educating the community. Members use their personal passions and interests to create new groups at BRAC and initiate projects to educate the community about aphasia. Members of this ambassador group choose their area of concentration (or pillar) and can change at any time.

The four pillars within the ambassador program include: Group or support facilitator, mentoring, advocacy and outreach, computer lab and technology for others with aphasia.

### ***Group Facilitator***

In the group facilitator pillar of the program, the members come up with an idea for a group, after which they create a plan, develop the group, conduct research, produce any materials needed, and facilitate or assist in running the group. Staff and students support at various levels, depending on the level of need.

Specific groups that have developed from the member driven ambassador program include: Genealogy, drivers group, BRAC news, bible study and travel group. All of these groups were conceived by members and developed with support of BRAC staff.

### ***Genealogy Group***

The genealogy group, as one example, was a 12-week group conceived and created by a member with aphasia. The end goal of this group was for group participants to find out about their own ancestry, collect photos and information about their family, and create a family tree to share with others in the group.

For planning and support, the member who started the group and an SLP met at lunch for 2 months to discuss the group, plan each week, and create aphasia-friendly support materials. The member-facilitator also made several conference calls with representatives from her ancestry group for more ideas. She organized her own family photos and labeled them to visually tell her family story. She created her own aphasia-friendly photo family tree as an example to show the members.

The group began with initial support from the SLP and by the end of week six, the member was independently running the group with minimal to no support. She utilized the website [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) to give examples and help the others learn how to research information about their own family. During the last meeting of the genealogy group, the members shared their family trees and discussed what they learned about themselves. They were able to take these family trees home and share with their family.

### ***BRAC News***

BRAC News was another group created by a member in the ambassador program. This particular member brought a picture of Ron Burgundy (Will Ferrell in *Anchorman*) to an SLP and pointed to it and said "Me, news. BRAC." The BRAC news group was created from his idea.

The BRAC news group members plan/create a 15-20 minute news cast that is viewed by BRAC members, staff, family and students and is posted on a closed Facebook group page. The newscast agenda and roles are all decided within the group. The news topics and roles change with every production. The news topics vary and include: sports, fashion, dining, motivations/interviews, restaurant reviews. The assignment of roles (anchor, interviewer, scripting, editor, props etc.) is completed by the BRAC news group. Members may choose to interview other members, spotlight friends/family, or give information on aphasia for others. Members collaborate with each other using iPads, cell phones, books and computers to complete research regarding their topic of choice. Members write preliminary scripts and collaborate with SLPs and students to film. The production and editing takes place over a series of 6-8 weeks and the final production is showcased at the center.

### ***Mentoring***

The mentoring pillar promotes teaching and helping others. Mentors within the ambassador program are responsible for giving tours of the BRAC, telling families about aphasia and the center, and introducing and helping new members on their first days at BRAC. They also help in training new students, residents and visitors about aphasia and communication strategies.

### ***Advocacy and Outreach***

The ambassador involved in the advocacy group has the responsibility of teaching the community about aphasia and ways to help facilitate communication with PWA. These members determine local places where education about aphasia is needed the most such as grocery stores, Starbucks or the humane society.

One example of their work in the community came after the members' frustration with ordering at the local Starbucks. The group talked to the manager, and after education and discussion, they worked together on a training plan to help this store. The group created an aphasia-friendly menu for Starbucks and conducted hands on communication training with the Starbucks' staff. The staff then came to the aphasia center and conducted a fun and educational coffee seminar for BRAC members.

The advocacy groups were also involved in a community outreach program with the Jacksonville Humane Society, called Pawsative Reading. This program encouraged and supported people with aphasia to read stories out loud to newly rescued dogs. The members would practice reading their supported book of choice at the center and home for several weeks. Then, the BRAC members would take monthly bus trips to the humane society to read out loud to the animals and educate staff and visitors about aphasia. This program taught members with aphasia the basic science of reading stories aloud (Knollman-Porter et al., 2015) and how this can help diminish feelings and symptoms of stress and anxiety in animals (Brayley & Montrose, 2016).

### ***Computer Lab and Technology***

The ambassador in the computer lab group assists other members to learn about technology, applications and ways to adapt their phone to make it more aphasia friendly (e.g., increasing font size, adding text to speech, etc.). The ambassadors with aphasia involved in this program must complete training sessions that include: supported communication training, hands on experience with using aphasia applications and computer software, using technology such as texting, YouTube, and Facebook.

Prior to starting the computer lab, the members create one goal they wanted to accomplish in the area of technology. Some goals accomplished in this group include being able to retrieve and listen to Korean Karaoke YouTube videos, comment and like on Facebook, text simple messages, send emoji's, GIFs and pictures to family, independently use aphasia apps on personal iPad and take photos with their phone. During this lab, trained members with aphasia utilize aphasia-friendly handouts, PowerPoints, support from graduate students, and hands-on repetitive practice. Their goal and success is measured by independently accomplishing their specific technology goal at home utilizing visual or tip sheets.