The Aphasia Alliance's
Top Tips for 'Aphasia Friendlier' Communication

During 2012, the Aphasia Alliance worked together to draw up some ‘top tips’ about communicating with people with aphasia.

These ‘top tips’ are designed to help when communicating with someone, or people, with Aphasia. However, we believe these tips can help when communicating with nearly everyone.

You will find some ‘top tips’ that will help with please click on the words in red

- conversations with people with aphasia
- public speaking when people with aphasia are in the audience
- written communication and public speaking

These are some of our ‘top tips’. They are not complete lists.

Some of the Aphasia Alliance member organisations have developed resources to help specifically with communication with people with aphasia:

Aphasia Now Communication Strategies
http://www.aphasianow.org/Resources/Communication_Strategies_Aids-216/

Connect Various publications http://www.ukconnect.org/publications.aspx

Speakability Various publications
http://www.speakability.org.uk/Publications+and+Training

Stroke Association Accessible Information Guidelines
http://www.stroke.org.uk/professionals/accessible-information-guidelines

Written Communication
• use **large font** size - 14 or larger
• use a **Sans Serif** font - (e.g. Arial, Tahoma, Verdana, and many more)
• use **short clear sentences**
• leave plenty of **space between lines**
• use at least **1.5 spacing between lines**
• use **clear headings** to signpost information
• **highlight** the key points
  o **bold** - (be careful not to over use, because it feels like shouting)
  o bullet points
  o text boxes to highlight important information

• use **numbers (1, 2, 3)** instead of words (one, two, three)
• **do not use block capitals** (you lose the shape of the word)

**For longer documents**
• **add a brief summary** (3-4 bullet points) at the beginning of the document for those who can't read it all
• **divide** the information **into topics**
• include
  o an **index**
  o a **helpful words** section at the back
Using pictures

- **photos** are often better than clip-art, although not always

- put pictures **near the text** where appropriate

- use the **appropriate picture for the context**

- use a picture that **describes the idea, not the word** (e.g. do not use a picture of a cup of tea for 'making a cup of tea', show someone making the tea)
Conversations with people with aphasia

- **avoid background noise** where possible
- **make eye contact** with the person
- **speak clearly**
- **speak at a normal speed**, not too fast, not too slow (If you speak fast normally, slow down)
- use **short clear sentences** – give one piece of information at a time
- **ask one question at a time** - Do you want tea? Do you want coffee?
- **don’t rush** - allow time for the person to take in what you are saying
- **be patient** - give the person with aphasia space to respond at their pace
- **signal a change of topic**
- use facial **expression**, **tone** of voice, **pointing** and **gesture** to help explain what you are talking about
- have **paper and pen available** for both parties
- **write down key words**
- use **maps**, **calendars** and **photos** (e.g. family members) to **show** what you are talking about
- **encourage** the person to **communicate in any way** he/she can
- **encourage** the person to **let you know** when they have **not understood**
- **clarify** - and **rephrase** when necessary
- **listen to and watch for clues** in facial responses, tone of voice, pointing and gestures (non-verbal responses)
- **allow** time for **rests**
Public Speaking

- use short clear sentences
- speak clearly
- **pitch** - speak **loud enough** so that all can hear
- **vary** your tone of voice - don't speak at a monotone
- **pause** - don’t rush, pause occasionally
- **pace** - speak at a normal speed, not too fast, not too slow
- **signal** a **change** of topic
- **clarify** - and **rephrase** when necessary
- **summarise**
- **do not speak** for too long - allow for rests