

# theword



Aphasia New Zealand Charitable Trust  
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Issue 42

Summer 2020

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## Office Holiday Hours

The AphasiaNZ office **closes** at 3pm on **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**, and **reopens** at 9am on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021**.

*Enquiries received during this time will be answered in the New Year.*



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Phone: 07 220 9973  
Toll free: 0508 APHASIA (0508 274 274)  
info@aphasia.org.nz www.aphasia.org.nz

Aphasia New Zealand (AphasiaNZ) Charitable Trust  
Suite 3, 36 Cameron Road, Tauranga 3110  
PO Box 13435, Tauranga Central, Tauranga 3141

## From the EO

The words 'unprecedented' and 'challenging' have probably been two of the most-used words during 2020. They only partly describe the year just gone; a year where plans changed, events and trips were cancelled, and hand hygiene and cough etiquette became daily used phrases!



For many people with aphasia, communication is most successful (at least frustrating) when you are face to face with those whom you want to communicate with. So, with COVID-19 restrictions, opportunities to communicate declined and for some this resulted in increased isolation and a forced disconnection from activities which were important for well-being.

This newsletter is one of the main ways we share information and connect with you – it is your newsletter, and if you are interested in us featuring a particular topic, or you want to share something which may benefit others with and affected by aphasia, please get in touch and we will include your contribution in the next publication.

As always, your feedback, comments and suggestions are welcome and help inform our work, so please email these to [info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz)

The AphasiaNZ Team will be taking a break over Christmas and the New Year, and we wish you a relaxing break too. See you in 2021!

Until next time... Emma

## AphasiaNZ's Community Aphasia Advisors (CAAs)

### Auckland South – Abbey Jacobson

Email: [aucklandcs@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:aucklandcs@aphasia.org.nz)

### Auckland Franklin – Chris Lawson

Email: [franklin@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:franklin@aphasia.org.nz)

### Auckland Central and Waitemata – Jan Wanless

Email: [aucklandnw@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:aucklandnw@aphasia.org.nz)

### Waikato West Central – Christa Grbin

Email: [waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz)

### Tauranga – Kate Milford

Email: [tauranga@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:tauranga@aphasia.org.nz)

### Rotorua – Olivia Greenwood

Email: [rotorua@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:rotorua@aphasia.org.nz)

### Central North Island – Melinda Dakin

Email: [centralnorth@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:centralnorth@aphasia.org.nz)

### Wellington – Lauren Morrison

Email: [wellington@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:wellington@aphasia.org.nz)

### Christchurch – Eleanor Maxwell

Email: [christchurch@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:christchurch@aphasia.org.nz)

### Dunedin –

Email: [dunedin@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:dunedin@aphasia.org.nz)



Please note **all**  
**CAAs now use**  
**@aphasia.org.nz**  
**email addresses**

*All CAAs work part time hours. You can contact the office in Tauranga during business hours Monday-Friday by emailing [info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz) or calling 07 220 9973.*



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## Dunedin CAA Wanted



Our Community Aphasia Advisors (CAAs) provide resources and information to those new to aphasia, as well as facilitate local AphasiaNZ groups and activities and educate our communities, increasing knowledge and raising awareness of the nature and effects of aphasia.

Kathryn has been our CAA in Dunedin for a number of years now, but sadly for us she is moving on to new challenges. We are very grateful to her for all her work in the region.

We are looking for someone to work part time in Dunedin.

We are seeking someone with:

- 🕒 A knowledge of the nature and effects of aphasia;
- 🕒 An understanding of community services available in the Dunedin region for people affected by disabilities;
- 🕒 Excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- 🕒 Enthusiasm and flexibility;
- 🕒 Transport and a driver's license;
- 🕒 Computer skills (specifically with Mac/Apple products and devices).

Are you an SLT or related health professional looking for flexible, part-time contract work and an opportunity to use your skills to make a positive difference to the lives of those living with aphasia in the Dunedin area? If so, we'd like to hear from you.

Email [tauranga@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:tauranga@aphasia.org.nz) to enquire about this opportunity.

*(Please note: This is **not** an **SLT role** as AphasiaNZ does not provide therapy, or therapeutic interventions, but is suited to someone with a SLT background).*



# AphasiaNZ Mindfulness Course



Earlier this year, during the first lockdown, AphasiaNZ asked accredited Mindfulness Teacher and Speech-language Therapist Melissa Delaux to develop a **Mindfulness course** for **spouses/family members/carers** of people with aphasia.

The course was specifically designed to be delivered via live video conferencing.

The 8-week course finished recently, and we have received some very **positive feedback** from people who took part!

They told us that they would recommend the course to other family members/spouses and that it had been useful for helping them cope with all the changes that aphasia brings to families.

We will be offering this course again if there is sufficient interest.

If you would like to know more, or you would like to put your name down on the waiting list for the next online course, please contact us by emailing [info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz)



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# IT'S CONVERSATION

## Introductory Training for Supported Conversation

### What is Supported Conversation?

Conversations are two way. To have a successful conversation all people involved need to think about the way they communicate.

Aphasia affects access to words/language. This means we need to identify strengths in communication and find alternative ways for areas of difficulty.

Supported conversation helps us focus on what is working well and what could be improved and use strategies to achieve success in conversation.

AphasiaNZ has developed an introductory training package in supported conversation. This training can be delivered via video link (Zoom).



What does the training involve?

- Discussion around supported conversation techniques
- The person with aphasia and their spouse/family member decide which techniques they want to focus on
- The person with aphasia and their spouse/family member practice using the technique(s) in conversation
- The facilitator provides guidance and feedback

Want to know more? Contact us via email at [info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz) or by phone on 0508 274 274.



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## Online Korero Club

AphasiaNZ Korero Clubs bring people with aphasia together, to practice talking and to share their stories.

*Korero (noun) = conversation, story, news, discussion.*

If you live remotely or are unable to travel to a local Korero Club our online group might be right for you.

The Online Korero Club is facilitated by Christa, our Waikato West Central CAA.

Those participating share short speeches, jokes and games. Emails, photos and stories are sent through to Christa before meetings so she can show them on the shared screen to the rest of the group.



### Are you interested in joining the Online Korero Club?

**When:** Monday mornings during term time (starting again on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021)

**Time:** From 10am to 11.30am

**How:** Using Zoom



[Click here for an aphasia-friendly guide to using Zoom.](#)

For more information or to register, please contact AphasiaNZ by emailing [info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz)



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# AphasiaNZ Updates



Check out our recently updated website <https://www.aphasia.org.nz> It has been refreshed and revamped and is much more user-friendly; and we update it regularly. If you have any feedback or suggestions about what you would like to see on our website, we'd love to hear from you!



We now have **Aphasia? booklets** in 5 languages in addition to English: **Hindi, Chinese, Tongan, Samoan and Te Reo**. These are free for people with and affected by aphasia, and professionals/organisations wanting bulk copies can order these for \$2 each.



We are currently preparing **version 5 of the New Zealand Stroke and Aphasia Handbook** and it will be **ready in the New Year!** It is a useful tool to support people with stroke and aphasia, which you can refer to again and again. The 2021 edition will contain updated New Zealand-specific information about healthcare, support services, financial assistance, and more. Pre-order your copy by [emailing us](#). Or, [join as a Friend](#) today and we will send you a new copy as soon as it has been printed.



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People with aphasia in Tauranga recently shared their stories:

**'Aphasia leads to loneliness for Tauranga woman' – Margaret**

<https://www.sunlive.co.nz/news/254953-aphasia-leads-to-loneliness-tauranga-woman.html>

**'Living with aphasia' – Owen**

<https://www.sunlive.co.nz/news/251917-living-aphasia.html>

If **you** would like to **share your aphasia story** in the media (from anywhere in New Zealand), please contact us at [info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz) and we will liaise with your local media organisation.

Are you interested in being featured on our [Aphasia Stories](#) web page? Get in touch if you are.



Hi, I'm **Nicole** 😊

I have recently joined AphasiaNZ to provide some **admin support**. I have also been volunteering at the Tauranga Korero Club and it has been a great experience to be part of the group.



I am a **newly graduated Speech-language Therapist** (SLT) from **South Africa**. I have been living in New Zealand since beginning of 2020.

I look forward to being part of the team and wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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# Aphasia vs Cognitive Communication Impairment

## What is the difference between Aphasia and Cognitive Communication Impairment?



Sometimes aphasia and cognitive communication impairment can seem similar and it can be difficult to work out how they are different.

The reason why they seem similar is because they *are* similar. Language is a cognitive function. Other cognitive functions are also required to communicate well - like attention, memory and reasoning.

To understand the difference the word cognition needs to be defined.

Put very simply **cognition** is **thinking**. Thinking requires many functions including attention, memory, reasoning and perception.

**Aphasia** is an **impairment in language** e.g., word finding difficulties, trouble putting words together to make sentences, difficulty understanding the words that others say.

**Cognitive Communication Impairment** is an **impairment in cognition** (thinking) - things like attention, memory, reasoning etc. which affect how a person communicates.

- If an individual has difficulty communicating because of impaired **LANGUAGE** they have **APHASIA**.
- If an individual has difficulty communicating because of impaired **COGNITION** they have a **COGNITIVE COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENT**.

# Aphasia Software Finder

## 2 new exciting developments

### 1. Advanced search for professionals

The Aphasia Software Finder has **100s of English aphasia therapy apps** on their website to help you find a specific app more quickly. You can also seek professional advice to help you choose an app, as not all the apps suit all types of aphasia.

To find a specific aphasia therapy app, go to:

<https://www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org/advanced-software-search>

### 2. Information voiced assistive technology apps: (e.g., Alexa, Siri, Google Home, Cortona)

These apps can be activated using a **smartphone, tablet, or smart speaker** (e.g. **Amazon Echo, Google Home**). You speak to the device and it 'speaks' back to you or it carries out a command you've given it.

This technology is still new but there are some aspects that may already be useful to some people with aphasia. You can use it to:

- improve your speech and practice your speaking
- practice useful phrases and questions
- practice simple conversations
- support daily activities

For more information, go to <https://www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org/voice-activated-assistance>



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# Research: Your Experience of SLT

**Do you have aphasia from a stroke?**

**Would you like to tell your story?**



My name is **Robyn**. I am a Speech-language Therapist (SLT). I would like to hear the stories of people with **aphasia** and their experiences with **Speech-language Therapy**.

- Was it a good or bad experience?
- Do people with aphasia get the help they want/need?
- What could speech language therapists do differently?

I would like to interview people with aphasia who live in Aotearoa New Zealand.



The interview may be in person, or using a computer to talk by video call. Everyone who takes part will receive a \$25 supermarket voucher.



If you have aphasia **from a stroke** that happened **between 2015 and 2019**, and you would be willing to talk to me, contact me by sending an email to [robyn.gibson@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:robyn.gibson@auckland.ac.nz) or calling me on 021 0902 5406.



*Approved by the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee on 16/09/2020 for three years. Reference Number 1407.*

## Research: The VERSE study

**A randomized control trial of intensive aphasia therapy after acute stroke: *The Very Early Rehabilitation for SpEEch (VERSE) study.***



This study is the largest international aphasia clinical trial to date.

The study was carried out in Australia and New Zealand from 2014-2018.

The results have recently been published in the International Journal of Stroke.

This study aimed to address the lack of evidence about the efficacy of aphasia therapy in the acute setting following stroke.

VERSE set out to investigate whether **early, intensive aphasia therapy** would result in improved language and communication at 12 weeks post stroke, compared to usual care.

The investigators further hypothesised that higher dose training would result in better quality of life, and be cost effective.

Participants with aphasia following acute stroke were randomised to receive usual care (direct **usual care** aphasia therapy), or one of two higher intensity regimens of either non-prescribed (**usual care-plus**) or prescribed (**VERSE**) direct aphasia therapy.



Interestingly, the VERSE findings showed that:

- Early, intensive aphasia therapy did **not** improve communication recovery within 12 weeks post stroke compared to usual care.
- Early, intensive therapy did **not** significantly enhance quality of life or depression at 12 or 26 weeks post stroke.
- The majority of participants in the VERSE trial, regardless of group allocation, achieved significant, clinically meaningful gains in language recovery.

These findings challenge the theory that 'more intensive therapy is better' when started in the first two weeks post stroke.

It is likely that the early, rapid recovery in the first six months after stroke seen in this trial is due to a combination of spontaneous recovery and a treatment effect.

### **What does this mean?**

More therapy for aphasia is not better immediately after stroke.

Aphasia therapy probably needs to continue for longer – there is evidence that therapy is effective for aphasia more than 6 months after a stroke.

Recovery probably continues for much longer than expected.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1747493020961926>

## Our Contact Details



**You can get in touch with us in the following ways:**

### **By writing to us:**

AphasiaNZ, PO Box 13435, Tauranga Central, Tauranga 3141

### **By making an appointment and visiting us:**

At 36 Cameron Road, Tauranga 3110

### **By calling us:**

In the office on (07) 220 9973, *OR*

On our free phone number **0508 APHASIA**  
(0508 274 274)

### **By emailing us:**

[info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz)

### **Through our website:**

[www.aphasia.org.nz](http://www.aphasia.org.nz)

### **On our Facebook page:**

[www.facebook.com/AphasiaNZ](https://www.facebook.com/AphasiaNZ)



**We look forward to hearing from you**

*E tatari ana matou ki te whakarongo ki a koe*



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## Can you Help with a Donation?



As a Charitable Trust which does not have members, we do not ask for a yearly 'membership' fee or payment.

But as you may know, we do not receive government funding and grants and donations enable us to provide all services and resources.

It is only with your help and support that we can continue to provide vital and much-used services and resources in our communities.

### Can you help us by making a donation?

If you are planning on giving or donating to a charity this Christmas, please consider **making AphasianZ your charity of choice.**

Donations enable us to provide Community Aphasia Advisor (CAA) field officer services across New Zealand's main centres.

Donations can be made online into the AphasianZ bank account, by posting a cheque, or by credit card via PayPal online.

As AphasianZ is an approved donee organisation, you can claim a 33.33% tax credit for all donations over \$5.00. [Information about tax credits from the IRD is available here.](#)

**Please click here to donate online today!**



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# Brain Challenges

Can you Unscramble these Christmas Words?



1. leslb \_\_\_\_\_
2. sdlnac \_\_\_\_\_
3. snergtgei \_\_\_\_\_
4. lahyido \_\_\_\_\_
5. sksgocint \_\_\_\_\_
6. ttisomeel \_\_\_\_\_
7. nreaocotids \_\_\_\_\_
8. tsgfi \_\_\_\_\_
9. mshtiscar rete \_\_\_\_\_

Can you Solve this?

$$\begin{array}{rclcl}
 \text{Christmas Tree} & + & \text{Candy Cane} & + & \text{Christmas Tree} & = & 15 \\
 \text{Candy Cane} & + & \text{Gift} & + & \text{Gift} & = & 35 \\
 \text{Christmas Tree} & \times & \text{Christmas Tree} & - & \text{Christmas Tree} & = & 6 \\
 \text{Gift} & - & \text{Candy Cane} & \times & \text{Christmas Tree} & = & ?
 \end{array}$$

