



# Aphasia Mentors Program

## General Program Objectives

1. To enrich the education of speech-language pathology and audiology students as well as those in other health professions through their interactions with people with aphasia as mentors. Students are taught supportive communication techniques and learn to be group facilitators.
2. To enhance the quality of life for people with aphasia through engagement in meaningful activities associated with mentoring, advocacy and special interest groups.

## LCAA-focused Program Objective

To support members' participation in a conversation group setting, creating access by reducing environmental barriers through providing and modeling supported communication techniques, which may generalize to daily life. Personal factors are incorporated into the themes of the groups, and ongoing support will be provided to members to encourage development of a positive sense of self, reveal their identities and increase confidence.

### When:

Every Thursday 9:30AM - 1PM, with afternoon programs occasionally in the afternoon from 1:30 – 3 PM

2-3 Terms:

September – December;

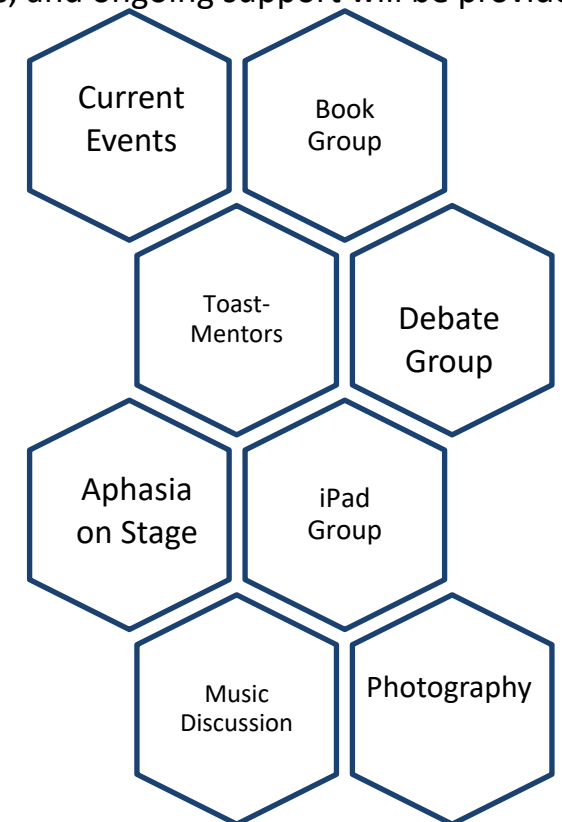
January – April;

**\*May- June**

### What:

#### Aphasia Mentors Program Sample Agenda:

9:30-10:20	Book Group
10:30-10:45	Large Group Announcements Introductions (if guests/new students are present)
10:50-11:50	Small Conversation Groups: General Special Interest ToastMentors
12:00 – 12:50PM	Aphasia Choir





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## Program Facilitator Training: Identifying potential differences

- The conversation groups are designed to be as authentic as possible. Facilitators aim to support conversation between members, versus towards the facilitator.
- Participation is measured by member engagement – this can be verbal or nonverbal. Facilitator focus is to provide *equal opportunities* for participation. In this way, emphasis is placed on social vs. language outcomes. Conversation is valued as a therapy intervention, indirectly targeting language domains.
- Groups are not task-oriented. Facilitators do not (typically) prepare materials in advance of the sessions. Facilitator training is based on three primary sources from the literature:
  1. Simmons-Mackie, N., & Elman, R. J. (2011). Negotiation of identity in group therapy for aphasia: the Aphasia Café. *International journal of language & communication disorders*, 46(3), 312 -323
  2. Simmons-Mackie, N., Elman, R. J., Holland, A. L., & Damico, J. S. (2007). Management of discourse in group therapy for aphasia. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 27(1), 5-23.
  3. Simmons-Mackie, N., & Kagan, A. (1999). Communication strategies used by 'good' versus 'poor' speaking partners of individuals with aphasia. *Aphasiology*, 13(9-11), 807-820.

## Who are the Program Facilitators? *Student Involvement*

### First semester (Sept-Dec)

1<sup>st</sup> year SLP and Audiology students rotate through the program weekly

### Goals for First Year Students:

- Develop a greater understanding of the impact of aphasia
- Practice supported communication strategies and techniques within a conversation group.

(Two 2<sup>nd</sup> year SLP students remain for all of first semester as part of their clinical externship).

### Second Semester (Jan-Apr)

2<sup>nd</sup> year SLP students rotate in weekly

### Goals for Second Year Students:

- Training and practice in supportive communication
- Facilitate conversation groups in consideration of participation, language, environmental and personal domains.

## Looking Forward...

- The Aphasia Mentors Program is open for referrals.
- Providing greater service to those impacted by aphasia

