Aphasia Community Partners Volunteer Handbook

Contact information: aphasiapartnerslnk@gmail.com

Our Mission
“Our mission is to connect individuals with aphasia to individuals in the community to enhance social involvement and understanding of the strengths of individuals with aphasia.”

Your Role
You will be asked to serve as a conversation partner with a matched up community member with aphasia. You will carry out our mission through once a week interactions with this individual engaged at getting them out into the community and showcasing their strengths as an individual. Some potential community outings may include:
- Visiting local parks
- Grabbing a treat at the ice cream shop
- Volunteering together
- Meeting over a lunch break
- Going to a museum

Requirements
• The success of this program is based off of the premise of building relationships. Therefore, we ask that you commit one hour per week for a minimum length of one semester.
• You must go through a background check through the College of Education and Human Sciences. Our organization will compensate you for any cost associated with this.
• You will be required to attend one volunteer training. This will be offered multiple times and will approximately last one hour.
• All transportation on your part as well as the participant should be set up independently. Under no circumstances should you transport your participant.
• We are not looking for people who are simply looking for a way to build their resumes. Volunteers in this program should have a passion for the individuals involved.

Logistics

Scheduling
For the first meeting, you will have a trained facilitator present (e.g., Speech-Language Pathologist or SLP graduate student) to help you with initial scheduling. There after, you and the PWA will decide when and where to meet.

People with Aphasia (PWA) often need more than verbal communication to understand and they have trouble finding words, so this makes talking over the phone difficult in many situations. Since aphasia is a “language” impairment, all forms of communication such as reading, texting, writing and speech are affected. Scheduling with a PWA is often best done face to face and with visual supports (e.g., having a monthly calendar) available in which you write the day, time and place. If they write the information, it
might be good to glance over subtly to assure they don’t use a “paraphasia” (a change to a word). For example, they may mean to write 1:00, but instead write 11:00. If they do have a phone and operate it well, you may communicate schedule information through email and text as reminders (e.g., meet Jenny Monday 11:00 @ Scooters).

You most likely will be communicating with significant others also, especially if they are arranging transportation. Be certain that they know who you are and any schedule changes.

You may be the one who helps the PWA arrange transportation (e.g., setting up the next visit’s time and place with Handy-Van). Keep in mind that a service like Handy-Van requires a week’s notice. As part of the Aphasia Community Partners Program, you are not allowed to transport the client. If transportation is an issue, meeting the PWA in their home, or at a place within walking distance close to their home may be the best option.

**Communication about YOU**

It would be good to provide this information to the client on your first visit:

- Printed picture of yourself
- Your written name
- Your email address
- Your phone number

Adding the above information to their communication book (if they have one) is a smart plan. Making sure that family has this information is important too. There may be times that a PWA has to cancel due to illness and family will want to notify you in advance.

It is also a good idea to write a summary of your outing or any interesting discussion points on a piece of paper or in their notebook so that they may communicate their outings with loved ones. For example:

“Bob and I met at Scooters on Monday. He ordered hot chocolate and I had a latte. We talked about his travels to Scotland. He was interested to know that I am originally from Hawaii. We are meeting again next Monday at Barnes and Noble at the SouthPointe mall.”

**What to bring**

- Bring a pen and notebook to use for augmented input and basic communication regarding scheduling, outing summary, etc. The notebook will be great for offering written choices to facilitate communication. The PWA will also want to use it as needed to supplement their speech (they may write the first letter of a word or draw a picture to get their message across).

- Be ready to use your smart phone if you have one. Finding pictures on google images can be handy to supplement the PWA’s understanding. Or, if they are
telling you a couple of key words but you don’t have enough background knowledge around a subject, you may be able to do a quick search to remedy any communication breakdowns.

- Consider bringing pictures of your family, pets, travels, interests.
- Magazines, newspaper articles (anything that might have pictures or topics to discuss)
- It will be beneficial to carry the contact information for the PWA in case of a medical emergency.

**Where to go?**

- For the first couple of visits, we recommend a place where you can sit, hear each other, and converse (e.g., coffee shop, quiet restaurant, quiet food court at the mall, city park with a bench or table, etc.). This way you can be face to face and really practice using your **supported communication techniques**. Once they become more automatic, outings where you are on the move may be easier and feel more comfortable.
- A few other ideas include touring a museum, a firehouse, Memorial Stadium, running errands at Target, movies, crafts, fishing, walking, ice cream, Salt Dogs games.
- Volunteers should balance the activities (e.g., free vs. cost-required activities) they do since they have a stipend of just $15 per month for both themselves and the PWA.

**What to talk about?**

Conversations should be genuine and meaningful. A PWA may enjoy talking about their lives and reminiscing about days from their past. They may also enjoy current events, and television shows. It’s fine to ask them what they like to talk about (be prepared to offer choices).

Some ideas to get you started:

1. Are you a sports fan? What do you like?; Football, baseball, basketball, etc. Who’s your team? (Don’t forget to tell them about your interests too).
2. How long have you lived in Lincoln? (give written choices). Did your kids go to school here? Which high school (give written choices if needed).

The important thing is that you focus on these concepts in conversation:

- ✔ Slow
- ✔ Simple
- ✔ Use environment
- ✔ Write words
- ✔ Visuals
Reimbursement
- You can receive reimbursement of up to $15 a month to offset the cost of activities.
- Once Aphasia Community Partners Program receives your completed volunteer information form and questionnaire you will receive an email with the attached reimbursement form.
- Donna Hahn is the coordinator for reimbursement through UNL’s College of Education and Human Sciences. You will email her your completed reimbursement form each month.

Other
- Aphasia Community Partners is promoting lasting and engaging interactions. As a result, it may be common for you or the PWA to take pictures on your outings. Keep in mind that it is important to obtain permission from the PWA to post anything about them or your outings on social media. As part of their paperwork process, they receive a consent to photograph form. Besides checking to see if they have given permission for being photographed or video recorded, asking each time you take a picture whether they approve, is encouraged.

- Thank you for your interest and willingness to volunteer! You are making a difference in the life of a PWA and they will appreciate it more than you might know or can imagine. Communication is the essential human connection!
VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. At what times are you interested in participating? Please write in times or check in the boxes for when you are available.

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2. How many hours a month (on average) would you like to participate?

- 2 hours
- 3-4 Hours
- 4+ Hours
- Other: __________________

3. Interests (Circle All That Apply):
   - Seeing movies
   - Going to museums (Morrill Hall, Quilt Museum, etc.)
   - Outdoor activities (Fishing, hiking, taking walks, etc.)
   - Going to restaurants/coffee/ice cream
   - Music (Jazz shows, concerts, etc.)
   - Crafting
   - Playing card games
   - Cooking
   - Travel
   - Sports
   - Art
   - Photography
   - Going to the theatre/seeing plays
- Other: __________________

4. How old are you?
Please tick appropriate box

- 18-21
- 21-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over

5. Why are you interested in the *Aphasia Community Partners Program*?

6. How much do you know about Aphasia? Please circle below:

😊😊😊😊😊

Very little Some Probably more than average

7. How comfortable are you interacting with a Person with Aphasia? Please circle:

😊😊😊😊😊

uneasy neutral confident