

Aphasia Family: Creating a Continuum of Conversation by Those Affected by Aphasia and Their Students

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Overview

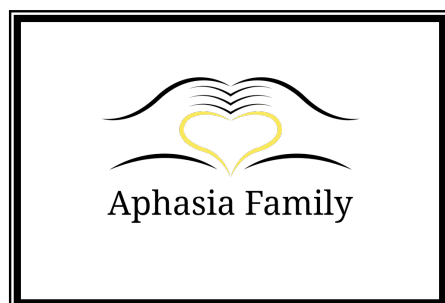
Aphasia House is an intensive comprehensive aphasia program at the University of Central Florida. In addition to intensive services, it also offers a multi-tiered delivery program that includes traditional outpatient therapy and group treatment that facilitates transitioning into life participation following therapeutic supports. Friday Only Club was created to bridge the gap between traditional outpatient treatment and full discharge from intervention. It was hypothesized that if a similar experience was given to members who had been in Friday Only Club for 5+ years, a sustainable community group could be created.

Purpose

This research directly engaged persons with chronic aphasia who had been in the Friday Only Club program at UCF in an action research project. The purpose of this research was to facilitate the development of a community group consistent with the wishes, values, and mission of the group members.

Methods

A UCF graduate student was enrolled in an independent study to learn the basic components of qualitative research design and implementation for program development. Preparation for this included a review of the literature relative to qualitative research, aphasia community groups and LPAA. Fifteen members of Friday Only Club were recruited to participate in a series of three focus groups.



Outcome

Themes identified from the initial focus group included *driving, work, volunteering, being with friends, and making a difference*. During the second focus group, the most popular activities and interests were discussed from surveys given. The most voted upon activities and interests included *travel, cooking, reading/current events, museums/theme parks, entertainment, exercise/wellness, arts/crafts, and service*. The final focus group was an opportunity to address the group with their decisions and bring forth further opportunities for personalizing their group. The members established a values and mission statement, created a name, and generated a calendar of events.

Discussion

Students were invited from all disciplines at UCF to volunteer. Currently, Aphasia Family has over 50 volunteers that include students from nursing, physical therapy, psychology, interdisciplinary studies, and CSD.

Aphasia Family Mission Statement

To restore learning, increase socialization, and enhance awareness through service.