Cultivating Relationships:
Narrowing the Research-Practice Gap in Best Practices for Aphasia

Mackenzie E. Fama and Maura E. Silverman

Objectives

By the end of the session, learners will be able to:
- Describe programs that are in place for encouraging clinically-informed research in the field of speech-language pathology.
- Identify methods of establishing and cultivating relationships in the LPAA community.
- Discuss opportunities for Aphasia Access to create communication portals and synergistic programs to reduce real and perceived gaps.

The research-practice gap and relevance to Aphasia Access

- Differences between research programs and the realities of clinical practice have been a source of discussion in the field of speech-language pathology for many years.
- Models such as LPAA (LPAA Project Group, 2001) and A-FROM (Kagan et al., 2008) challenge those invested in aphasia programming to consider the needs and expectations of a variety of stakeholders.
- Aphasia Access has strongly supported these objectives and affords us a unique opportunity to ensure that aphasia research ultimately has a positive impact on the provider, the client and the care partners.

Existing opportunities for collaboration

In order for narrow the research-practice gap regarding aphasia recovery outcomes, researchers and LPAA providers should **collaborate** to design and carry out clinically-informed research. One approach to collaboration is based on geographical proximity, i.e., a university-based researcher may pair with an LPAA provider in the area.

Additional resources for building these types of clinician-researcher relationships include:
- ASHA *CLARC: Clinicians and Researchers Collaborating*
- Aphasia Access member forums (Summit, FB group, website, etc.)
- Networking opportunities: state associations, conferences, etc.
- Local journal clubs, supervisor-benefits, etc.

- Relationships between researchers and LPAA providers should be mutually beneficial, with information transferring successfully in both directions
- The **key stakeholders** of this work are the patient/client and the family. Ideally, they receive something tangible in return for research participation, which might include:
  - Enhancement of their own recovery
  - A better understanding of their own language strengths and challenges
  - Explicit knowledge of their role in impacting future clinical programming in aphasia

Where do we go from here?

We look forward to continuing the dialogue through email. Sign up if you're interested!

Contact us:

Mackenzie E. Fama
Assistant Professor, *Towson University*
mfama@towson.edu

Maura E. Silverman
Founder and Executive Director, *Triangle Aphasia Project Unlimited*
maura@aphasiaproject.org

Selected References

Kagan, A., Simmons-Mackie, N., Rowland, A., Huijbregts, M., Shumway, E., McEwen, S., Threats, T., & Sharp, S. (2008). Counting what counts: A framework for capturing real life outcomes of aphasia intervention. *Aphasiology* (3), 258-280.

LPAA Project Group (2001). Life participation approach to aphasia: A statement of values. In Chapey, R. (Ed.), *Language intervention strategies in aphasia and related neurogenic communication disorders* (4th ed., pp. 23–245). Baltimore, MD: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins. (Originally published in the ASHA Leader, Volume 5, 2000.)