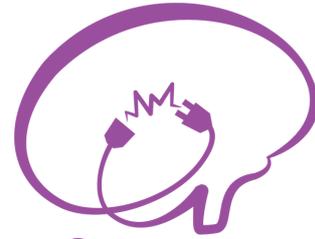


SPRING 2020 ISSUE

# Newsletter for People with Aphasia



Edited by Gabriella Farinha and Joanna Farrell



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**AND MORE!**

## Language Support Groups

### A note from the editors.

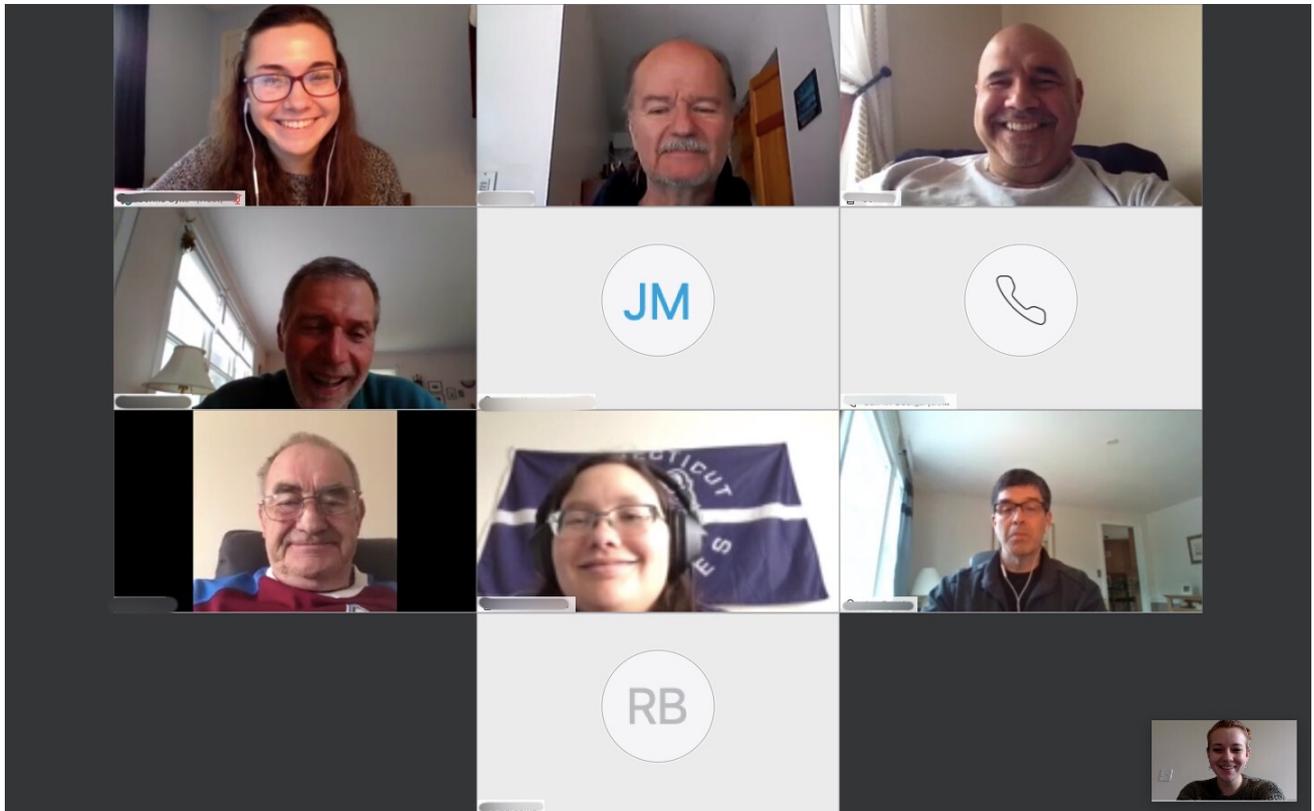
We have around 50 active members in our UConn Aphasia Groups. During this semester, we wanted to create a newsletter of resources, updates, and opportunities for you. This is a great way to stay connected with our members and keep them aware of what is going on with UConn Aphasia Groups!

For more information, to join a language support group, or to access online versions of newsletter submissions, please visit the Aphasia Rehab Lab website:

[aphasia-rehab.slhs.uconn.edu](http://aphasia-rehab.slhs.uconn.edu)

## Spring Semester 2020: COVID-19

Coronavirus (COVID-19) interrupted the UConn community, but this didn't stop members of our aphasia language support groups.



UConn closed its Storrs and regional campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the cancellation of our in-person aphasia groups. However, this allowed us to try something **completely new** with our aphasia groups --- **online meetings!**

On March 27, aphasia groups met online for the first time using WebEx. WebEx is a videoconferencing application that allows our members to meet from the comfort of their own homes. Student clinicians researched options for people with a phone, tablet, or computer. Each of our support groups and book clubs met at the same time on Fridays. The first meeting was a **huge success**, even though figuring out new technology can be difficult.

The willingness of our aphasia groups to adapt to online learning speaks volumes about our group members. They continue to be **determined and strive** to improve their language, even in the most troublesome times.

## Aphasia Group Member Spotlight: Lee

Get to know Lee, a member of our aphasia groups.



Lee (right) with student clinician Yasheera (left)

### **Where are you from?**

Originally I am from Nantucket, MA. Now, Windsor Locks, CT.

### **What year did you have your stroke?**

2014

### **How long have you been coming to aphasia groups?**

4 years

### **What are your hobbies?**

Playing golf, watch Football (go Patriots!), and go out to eat with Gail

### **How do you practice language at home?**

Talk to Gail. Also, scramble letters and try to make long words with them

### **Do you have any advice for people with aphasia?**

Come to UConn. Also, it is a long process and takes a lot of hard work [for recovery].

## What We Are Up To - Aphasia Rehab Lab Updates

The Aphasia Rehab Lab is doing a new study about language use in the homes of people with aphasia!

In this study, we want to find out more information about **how** and **how much** people with aphasia talk when they are at home. Many clinicians use rating scales when working with people with aphasia to get a sense of how they communicate outside of the clinic.

However, since this is a difficult question to answer, research assistant Sarah Arnett is completing a thesis comparing how these survey responses compare to recordings of people's actual conversations at home.

In the future, the Aphasia Rehab Lab hopes to use this technology to better understand how people with aphasia communicate in different settings and will use this information to improve aphasia therapy and communication partner training.



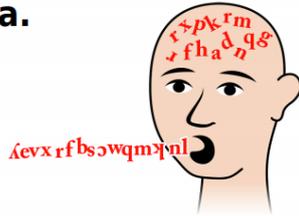
# Online Resources for People with Aphasia

## I have aphasia.

I have difficulty communicating.

Speak slowly and clearly.

Please give me time to talk.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: (999) 999-9999  
 Emergency Contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_

To learn more about aphasia, visit [aphasia.com](http://aphasia.com)

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## PRINTABLE APHASIA ID CARD

Sometimes people you interact and communicate with don't fully understand aphasia. Create and print your own aphasia ID card to spread aphasia awareness and help people communicate with you.

## CLEARCAPTIONS PHONE



ClearCaptions home phone transcribes what your callers say *as they say it*, allowing you to read the text off of a large color touchscreen. All you need is your aphasia to be certified by a qualified healthcare professional and this resource is completely free to you!

## CONSTANT THERAPY

Constant Therapy is an app that allows you to practice speech, language, and cognitive therapy at home. You can practice a wide range of skills including reading comprehension, attention, naming, and word retrieval. It is available as an app for phone or tablet and is free for the first two weeks. After the trial, you buy a subscription for \$24.99/month or \$249.99 per year.



# Mindfulness and Health

Here are some ways to stay active at home during quarantine!

## PELOTON APP- EXTENDED FREE TRIAL

Peloton is offering an extended free trial of their exercise programs! There are many different levels of activities like yoga, running, and more. This free trial is available for 90 days on the Peloton app, which you can access at [onepeloton.com](https://onepeloton.com)



## HEADSPACE APP

Meditation has been shown to help people stress less, focus more and even sleep better. Headspace is meditation made simple. When you sign up you get access to their free Basics pack, which is a 10-day beginner's course. Sign up online at [headspace.com](https://headspace.com) or download the app in the Apple app store or GooglePlay.



# Connecting with the Community

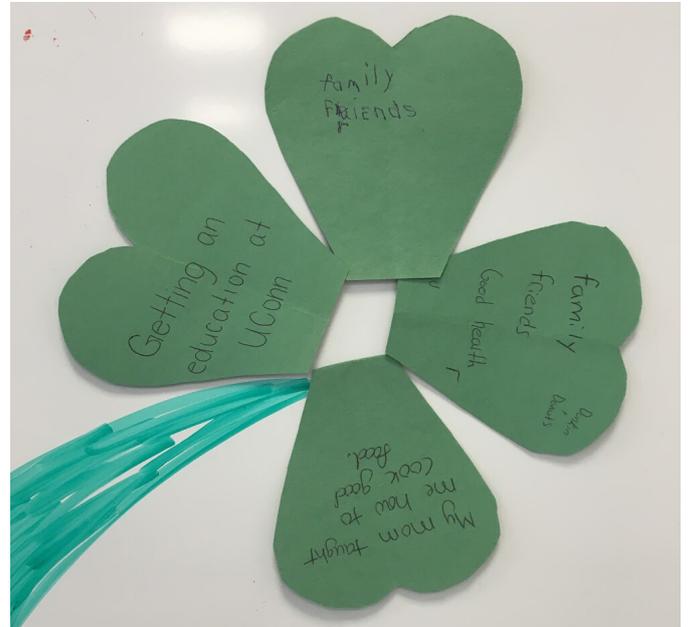
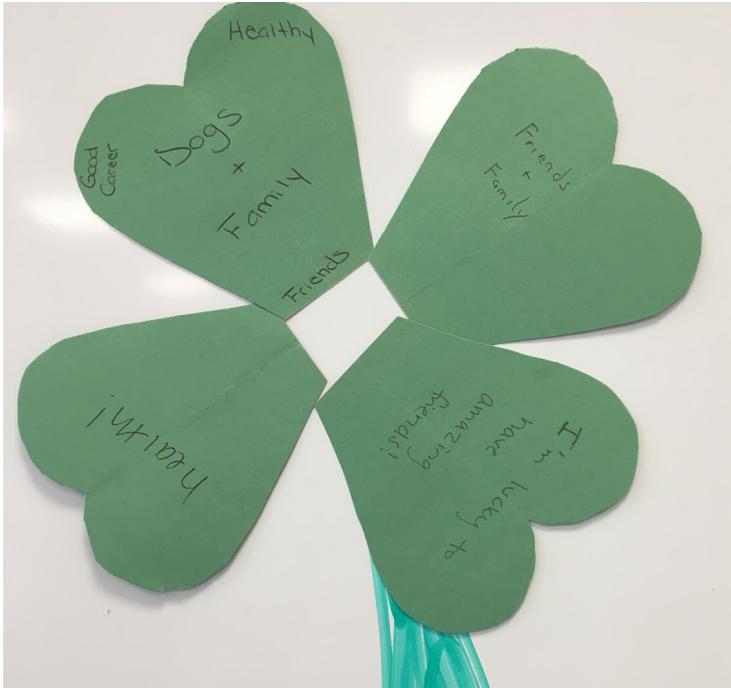
## Take a look into UR Community Cares

UR Community Cares virtually links people who want to give their helping hands to people in need of help so they can have free at-home support. The platform digitally connects Volunteers to age-qualified adults age 70+ or 18+ with a physical disability, such as Aphasia and more. This allows neighbors to help neighbors in Connecticut. If you are interested in any UR Community Cares services, check out their website.

[urcommunitycares.org](https://urcommunitycares.org)

## Why Are You Lucky?

Members of Aphasia Group 1 made four-leaf clovers to share why they were lucky this Saint Patrick's Day. Take a look!



## Aphasia Group Member Spotlight: A Dedication to Bob Hasselberger

Bob Hasselberger was only in his early forties when he had a stroke as a result of a rare blood disorder. It was a significant stroke impacting a large percentage of his left hemisphere but Bob made rehabilitation his mission. He said recovery was his new job! He participated in speech and language therapy from the beginning and when he felt he wasn't being pushed hard enough, he moved on to another speech and language pathologist.

He completed every scrap of homework assigned and then discovered the UConn aphasia groups where he suddenly had to speak in front of a group—a harder task. He had to read a little, too, and this was a huge challenge for him at the time.

(Continued on page 8)



We gave him more homework every time he requested it. He volunteered to be a participant in research studies at every opportunity. This meant sometimes grueling testing and a very rigorous treatment schedule. He continued to improve and joined our aphasia book club where he read his first full book since his stroke. Bob became a role model to other new people in the aphasia book clubs. He also volunteered at rehab hospitals to show those who have had a stroke that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Bob also gave guest lectures at UConn in our neuroscience class and in the graduate level Aphasia course. Students often remarked that that was the highlight of the semester. About a decade after his stroke, Bob received a cancer diagnosis and died this February. Bob asked that his friends and family members contribute to what is now known as The Robert Hasselberger Fund: Advancing Aphasia Research Foundation, available at [s.uconn.edu/aphasia](https://s.uconn.edu/aphasia). He wanted these funds to be used for the research of treatments for all people with aphasia, but particularly those with mild aphasia, like him.

## Research Opportunity

We are studying language use in the home environment. If you are interested in helping us with this study and live with no more than one other person, we would love to hear from you! We will conduct all activities online in order to avoid contact. No online experience necessary. We can help you with that part!

Participants who complete the study will receive \$100 for approximately 2 hours of assessment time and for operating a recording device for two days. Thanks in advance for those willing to help.

Please email or call the principal investigator, Jennifer Mozeiko at **860-420-9828** or [jennifer.mozeiko@uconn.edu](mailto:jennifer.mozeiko@uconn.edu)