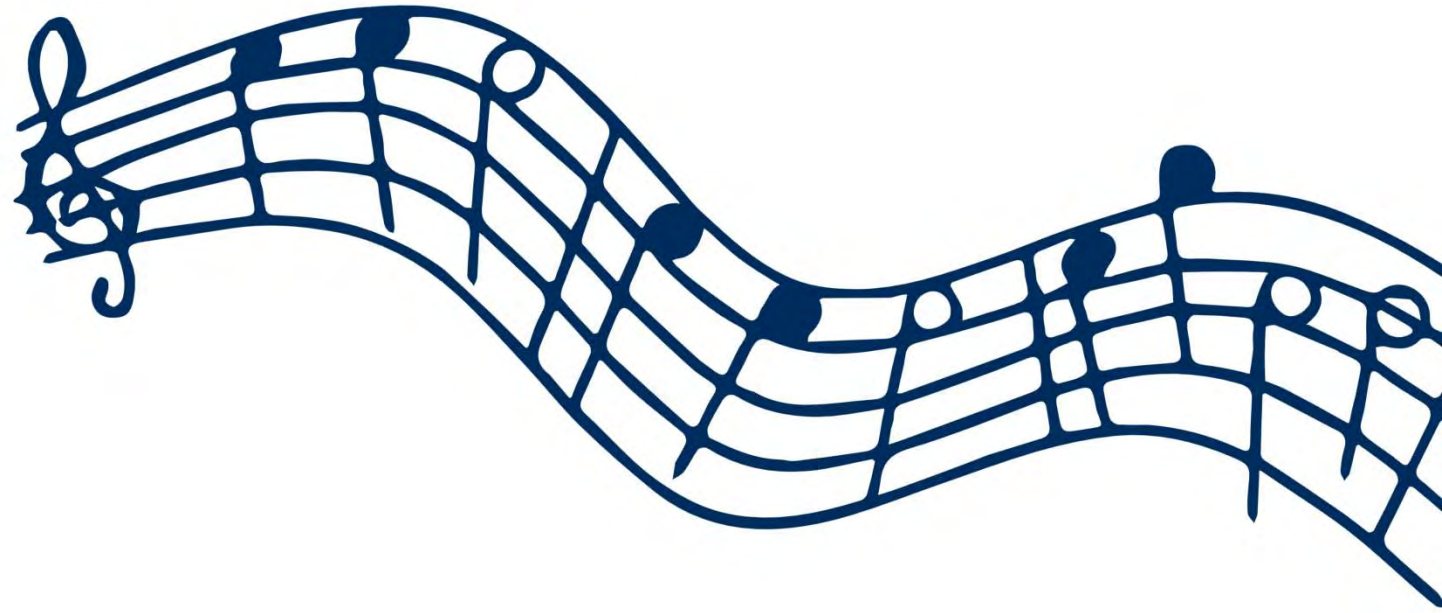




When Words Fail: Using Singing as Communication Therapy

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UPPER VALLEY
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- Introduction
- Aphasia & singing
- Outcomes of group singing & aphasia
- Psychological/wellbeing/caregiver outcomes
- Aphasia Choir of the Upper Valley
- Q&A





Aphasia

- Language disorder caused by damage to the brain (most often after stroke) but can also occur with dementia, TBI, brain tumor/infection.
- Not a problem with intelligence – people with aphasia know what they want to say but have trouble expressing or understanding words.
- Can affect speaking, understanding, reading, and writing, but each person's profile is different.

Symptoms of Aphasia



**Trouble
speaking clearly**



**Trouble
understanding speech**



**Trouble
writing clearly**



**Trouble understanding
written words**



**Trouble
remembering words**



?????

**Trouble remembering
object names**



Aphasia & Community, Caregiving, & the Family System

- Interpersonal relationships and the overall health of the family structure compromised
- Interferences in familial relations, frictions with a spouse, anxiety in meeting strangers, loss of friends, or loss of abilities to make social connections
- Supporting family system & caregiver



Aphasia & Mental Health

- High levels of clinical depression
- Nevertheless, aphasic individuals rarely receive mental health intervention
- Difficulty in assessing the mental health status from patients
- Loss of personal agency/sense of dignity
- Loneliness



Aphasia & Singing

- Singing activates widespread networks
- Left hemisphere engagement
- Right hemisphere engagement
- Rhythm & melody
- Memory pathways
- Neuroplasticity
- Emotional/motivational circuits (limbic system, reward pathways)



Why Group Singing?

- Accessibility
- Shared neural networks
- Social connection
- Cost-effective
- Functional gains
- Emotional well-being
- Generalization



Caregiver Outcomes

- **Less depression**
- **Better mood**
- **Confidence**
- **Improved communication**
- **Shared positive experiences**
- **Better relationships**
- **Emotional wellbeing**



THE APHASIA CHOIR OF THE UPPER VALLEY



Dartmouth
Health



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QUESTIONS?



Resources & References

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