

BENEFITS OF ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR PEOPLE With APHASIA (PWA)

- Created by Ben Norell
- Who has worked with People with Aphasia?



Scan QR Code with Phone
Camera to follow along



01

INTRODUCTIONS AND BACKGROUND

Who am I? Why this topic?

02

BENEFITS OF ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR PWA

Research on quality of life for People with Aphasia (PWA) post-stroke.

Benefits of Life Participation

Approach to Aphasia (LPAA).

03

FACILITATING A VIRTUAL SESSION WITH BEST PRACTICES

How to run a virtual support group session.

04

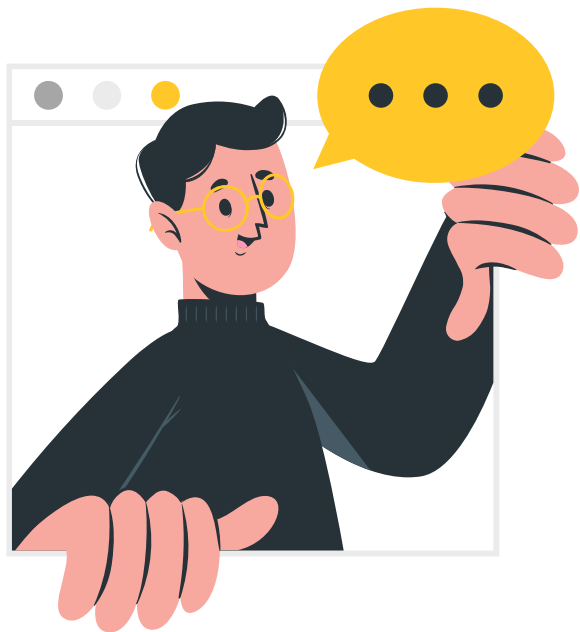
CREATE YOUR OWN VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR PWA

How to get started and involved.

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ABOUT ME



HI, I'M **BEN NORELL**

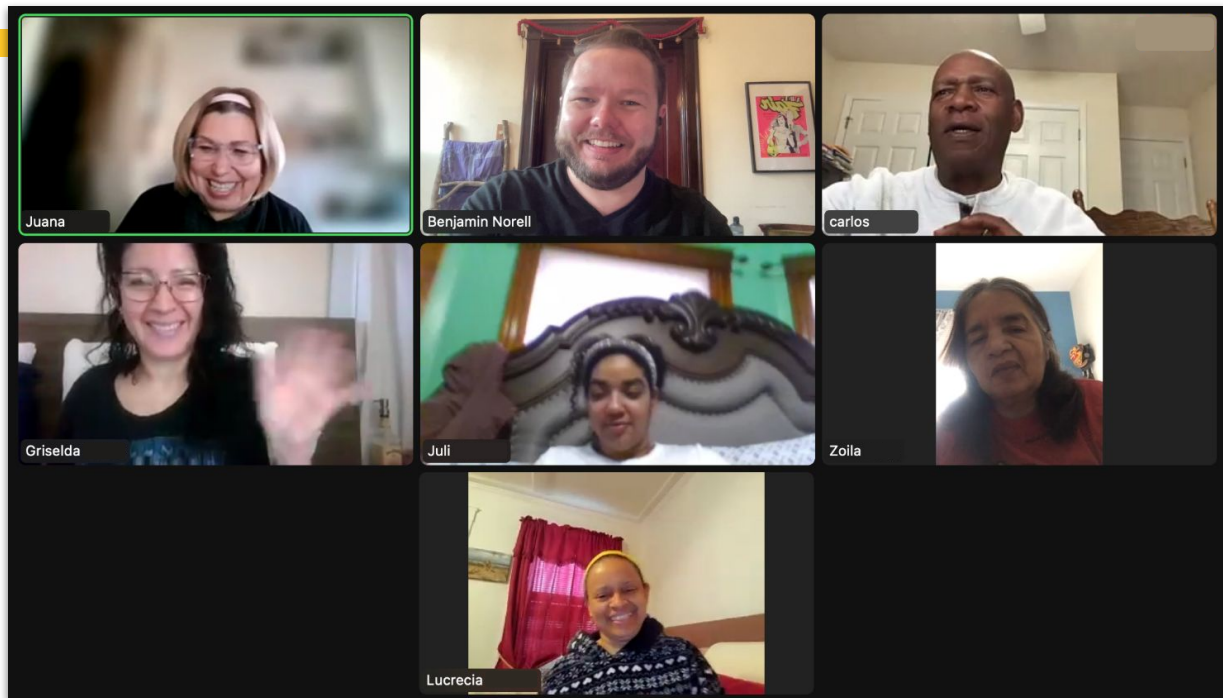


- ESL Teacher for 6 years
 - Taught virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown
- Bilingual SLP Graduate Student at **Fontbonne University** in St. Louis, MO
- Helped run an **in-person support group** for PWA
- Volunteer for Lingraphica's **Virtual Connections**
 - **Online support groups** for PWA

¡AFASIA EN ESPAÑOL!

My Online Support Group for Spanish-speakers with Aphasia

- Started May of 2022
- Only Spanish-speaking session (now there are 3!)
- Unparalleled way to build connection and community for people with shared interests that also have aphasia



QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH APHASIA: RESEARCH STUDIES



- Out of 60 diseases and 15 conditions, Aphasia had the **greatest negative impact on quality of life.** (Lam & Wodchis, 2010)
- Out of 970 stroke survivors, those **with aphasia** were over **7x more likely** to exhibit post-stroke **depression.** (Zanella, 2022)
- With every **1-point increase** in aphasia severity, PWA were **2x more likely** to experience post-stroke **depression.** (Zanella, 2022)
- **Involvement in life** was one of the most **prominent factors** when interviewing 24 family members of PWA. (Brown, 2011)
- **Friendships and diverse social networks** were significantly **lower** for PWA compared to healthy older adults. (Hilari & Northcott, 2017)
- PWA had **higher anxiety levels** compared to healthy adults due to living in a **state of social isolation.** (Pisano, 2020)

LIFE PARTICIPATION APPROACH TO APHASIA (LPAA)



- It focuses on **re-engagement in life**
- Life enhancement **first** - **then** language repair
- **Client-driven**, service-delivery approach to support PWA in achieving their immediate and longer term life goals (Chapey, 2000)
- Aims to maximize **functional communication** and **participation in desired life activities** (Rogalski, 2018)
- **Participation in life, social relationships, and life quality** are the ultimate targets of **health and rehabilitation** (WHO IFC, 2001)
- Positive **health benefits** when building interpersonal **relationships** and **community** (Elman, 2007)

EXISTING ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Virtual Connections is a **FREE** video-conferencing program offered by **Lingraphica** and **Aphasia Recovery Connection** for people with aphasia.

PURPOSE

To provide a place for people with aphasia to **connect** and **practice** their **conversation skills** in a safe, welcoming environment.



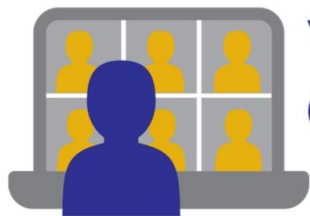
NOT SPEECH THERAPY

Virtual Connections is not speech therapy. Therefore, **student clinicians** (like myself) **can facilitate** their own sessions and gain experience!

FREQUENCY

Sessions are offered **seven days per week**, each focusing on **improving**:

- quality of life
- conversation
- social connection



VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Aphasia Recovery Connection
& Lingraphica



WIDE-REACHING EFFECT

Created in March 2020 in
response to the pandemic.
It now has:

- 3,500 members
- 75 volunteer facilitators
- 50 states & 45 countries

HOW TO BECOME A VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS FACILITATOR (OR START YOUR OWN)



PICK A TOPIC

Find a topic that interests you! Examples of VC topics:

Sewing Club
Open Chat
Supernatural

Travel
Culinary
Poetry



PICK A DAY & TIME



Find a day of the week and time that works for you. Facilitate on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis.



FACILITATE CONVERSATION

Initiate and facilitate conversation between the participants in your group on your selected topic!

WHO BENEFITS?

1. **PWA online** that use Virtual Connections
2. **PWA in your community / clinic** that desire connection
3. Graduate **Students / SLPs** that want more experience with PWA
 - Again, it isn't therapy, just a **conversation!**
 - You can also **observe sessions** as a guest
 - **Then decide** if you want to start your own topic/session
4. You can **start your own** just by creating a **Zoom link** and sharing it!



Presentation



Contact Info



Virtual Connections Sessions



Become a VC Facilitator



THANKS!

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

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