

Word Finding Strategies

When you're talking and you can't think of the word

Describe what you are thinking of

For example, if the word is **refrigerator**

"It's in the kitchen. It keeps the food cold."

If the word is **pigeon**

"It's a kind of bird."

Describe the word

For example, if the word is "watch"

"It starts with w"

"It has one syllable"

"It has five letters"

General ideas for keeping words in mind

Listen to TV and radio

Don't just watch, listen to the words.

Read

Read magazines, newspapers, books, anything that you are interested in.

Play word games

Many games involve using words, for example, Scrabble, Pictionary, TriBond. TV game shows such as Jeopardy and What 100 Americans Think are also good.

Conversation

Talk to people on the phone or in person. The more you talk, the easier it will be.



Compensating for Word-Finding Difficulty

The individual with aphasia may have difficulty saying or finding the right word to use at the right time. Encourage the use of the indicated techniques to help:

- Find or recall the word
- Compensate for the word-finding difficulty
- Express meaning

___ 1. Gesture

Encourage the person to use hands or arms to express needs and meanings. For example:

- Rubbing the forehead = headache
- Making a beckoning movement = come here
- Motioning to the mouth = food or drink
- Waving = hello or goodbye

___ 2. Pantomime

Encourage the person to use hands or arms to:

A. "Describe" a desired object

- Making a cutting motion = knife
- Making a pounding movement = hammer
- Making a circular movement = a round object, such as a ball, a wheel, or a ring

B. "Describe" a state or event

- Pretending to slip a ring on the ring finger = married or a wedding
- Making a rocking movement with the arms = a christening or birth, or a baby/grandparent

___ 3. Pointing

Encourage the person to point to the object or item desired. Say the name of the item pointed to and ask the person to repeat it and/or write it.

4. Describe Objects

Encourage the person to tell you what the needed object or item is used for. This sometimes helps the patient to find the name of the object.

- "You use it to pound nails" (hammer)
- "You shave with it" (razor)

5. Circumlocution

Encourage the person to give as much information as possible on the topic.

- "We eat turkey—family gets together—it's a holiday—it's in November"
= Thanksgiving
- "It's round—it has a hole—we eat it at breakfast" = doughnut

6. Associated Words

Encourage the person to provide words that are related to or associated with the word the person is trying to find.

- Sleep, tired, lie down, furniture = bed
- Drink, white, cow = milk

7. Synonyms

If the person is having difficulty finding a particular word, encourage the person to:

A. Use another word that has the same meaning

- "Couch" for "sofa"
- "Lady" for "woman"
- "Pretty" for "beautiful"

B. Use a word that has a similar meaning

- "Sneakers" for "shoes"
- "Scissors" for "shears"
- "Clock" for "wrist watch"

If you know what the person is trying to say, then help the person recall the word.

A. Provide a sound clue to help with recall.

- "The word begins with a 'D' sound" (drink)
- "Do you want a d_____ or dr_____?" (drink)

B. Provide a lead-in phrase or sentence for the person to complete.

- "A tube of _____" (toothpaste)
- "Do you want a slice of _____?" (bread)
- "Have a glass of _____" (water)

Please refer to the *Caregiver Information* handout, *Aphasia*, for more information.

Reference

Stryker, S. 1981. *Speech after stroke*. 2d ed. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Additional Comments/Suggestions

Linguistic Drills - Objects

Patient _____ Date _____

Repetition: Say butter

Sentence completion: I like bread and _____

Responsive naming: What do you spread on bread?

Picture or object naming: What's this?

Category generation: Tell me 3 things you spread on bread

	Sentence Completion	Responsive Naming	Obj/Picture Naming	Category generation
1. Cup (Pour the tea in my ___)				
2. Spoon (I eat soup with a ___)				
3. Glasses (To see better I wear a pair of ___)				
4. Pencil (To write a letter I need paper and ___)				
5. Scissors (Cut this with a pair of ___)				
6. Flashlight (If you go outside at night, take a ___)				
7. Knife (Cut your steak with a sharp ___)				
8. Comb (Neaten your hair with a ___)				
9. Fork (Set the table with a knife & ___)				
10. Toothbrush (Brush your teeth with a ___)				