

Creating Connection

A Guide to Starting an Aphasia Group



1 Before You Begin

Ask yourself a few questions:

- Why do I want to start a group?
- Who is this group for?
- Is there already a group nearby?
- Who could I partner with?

Check the NAA Group Provider Directory first. You might find a group that already exists — or a partner waiting to collaborate.



2 Types of Aphasia Groups

- **Peer Support Group**

Share experiences and encouragement

- **Conversation Group**

Practice communication in a safe space

- **Activity-Based Group**

Art, music, games, cooking

- **Education Group**

Learn about aphasia together

- **Advocacy Group**

Raise awareness and drive change



3 Who Can Start a Group?

Anyone with passion and commitment!

- ✓ A person with aphasia
- ✓ A care partner or family member
- ✓ A speech-language pathologist
- ✓ A hospital or rehab center
- ✓ A faith-based organization
- ✓ A library or community center

You don't need a degree. You need heart.



4 What Makes a Great Group?

A great group isn't about perfection.
It's about connection.

- People feel welcome and safe
- Everyone can participate
- There is laughter and belonging
- Members keep coming back
- The focus is on people, not problems

Start simple. Grow together.



5 Your First Five Steps

Step 1: Define your purpose

Who is this for? What need does it fill?

Step 2: Find a meeting space

Library, church, clinic, or online

Step 3: Set a schedule

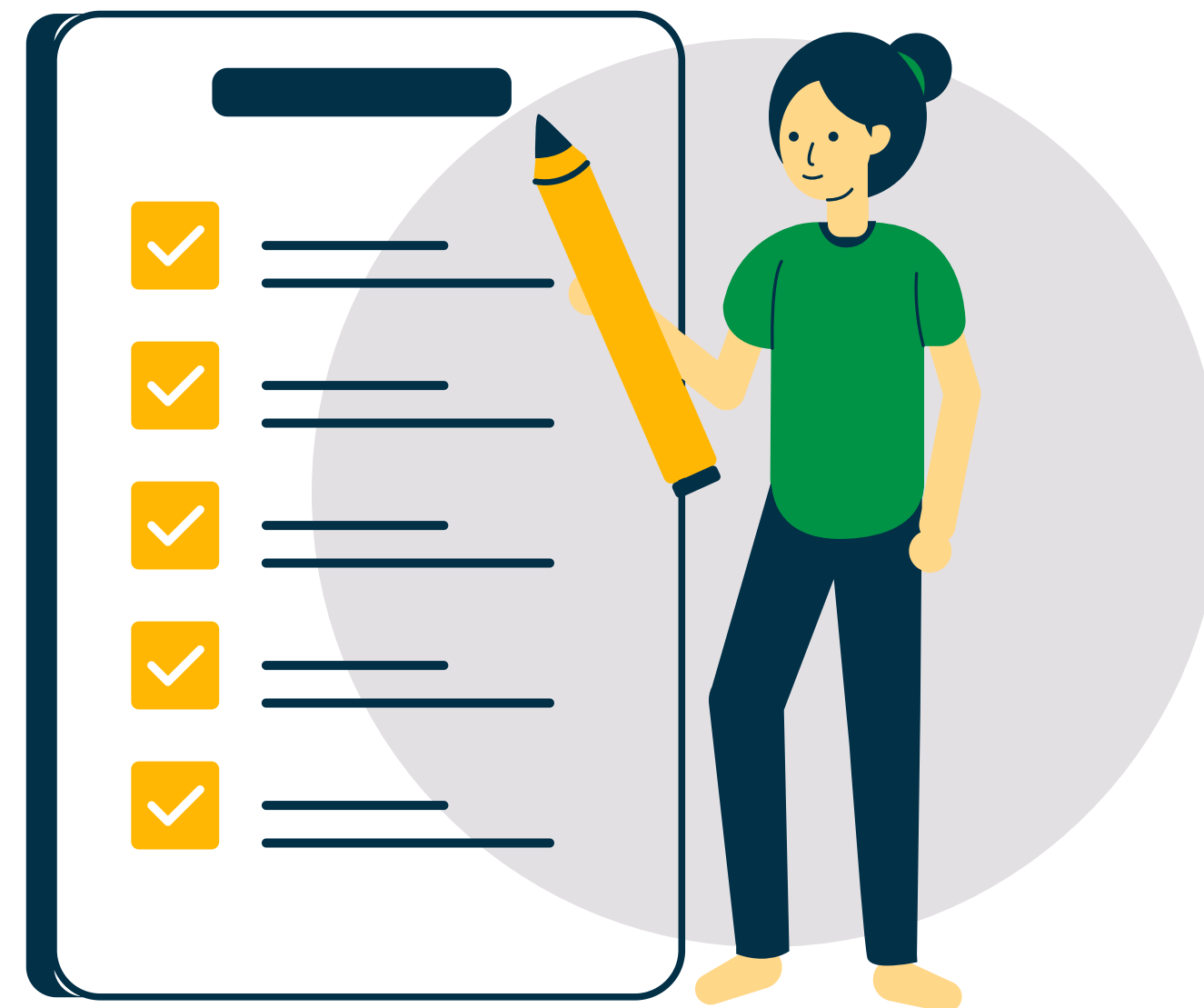
Consistency builds trust

Step 4: Spread the word

Reach out to hospitals, clinics, and the NAA

Step 5: Host your first meeting

Keep it simple. Welcome everyone.



6 Aphasia-Friendly Meetings

Make every meeting accessible:

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use short sentences
- Give people time to respond
- Use visuals, gestures, and writing
- Reduce background noise
- Provide written agendas
- Repeat key information
- Ask yes/no questions when helpful
- Celebrate all communication attempts

Inclusion is the goal.





Finding Members

Where to find people who need your group:

- Hospitals and rehab centers
- Speech-language pathology clinics
- Neurologists and primary care offices
- Social workers and case managers
- NAA website and social media
- Local stroke support groups
- Senior centers and libraries
- Facebook groups and online communities



Post flyers. Tell everyone. Word of mouth works.

8

Planning Your Meetings

- Welcome and check-in (10 min)
How is everyone today?
- Main activity (30–40 min)
Conversation, games, or a guest speaker
- Social time (10–15 min)
Coffee, snacks, and connection
- Wrap-up (5 min)
What's coming next time?



Keep it predictable. People feel safe with routine.

9

Activity Ideas

- Storytelling and life sharing
- Trivia and word games
- Art projects and coloring
- Music listening and singing
- Current events discussion
- Cooking demonstrations
- Guest speakers
- Book clubs (aphasia-friendly)
- Holiday celebrations
- Community outings
- Technology practice
- Advocacy letter writing

**Mix it up. Follow
your members'
interests.**





Common Challenges

"Only 3 people came."

Small groups can be powerful. Keep going.

"Members have very different abilities."

Pair activities. Use multiple communication modes.

"I don't have funding."

Start free. Libraries and churches donate space.

"I'm not a professional."

You don't have to be. You just have to care.

"Someone dominates the conversation."

Gently redirect. Use structured turn-taking.

Don't worry. Every group faces these!





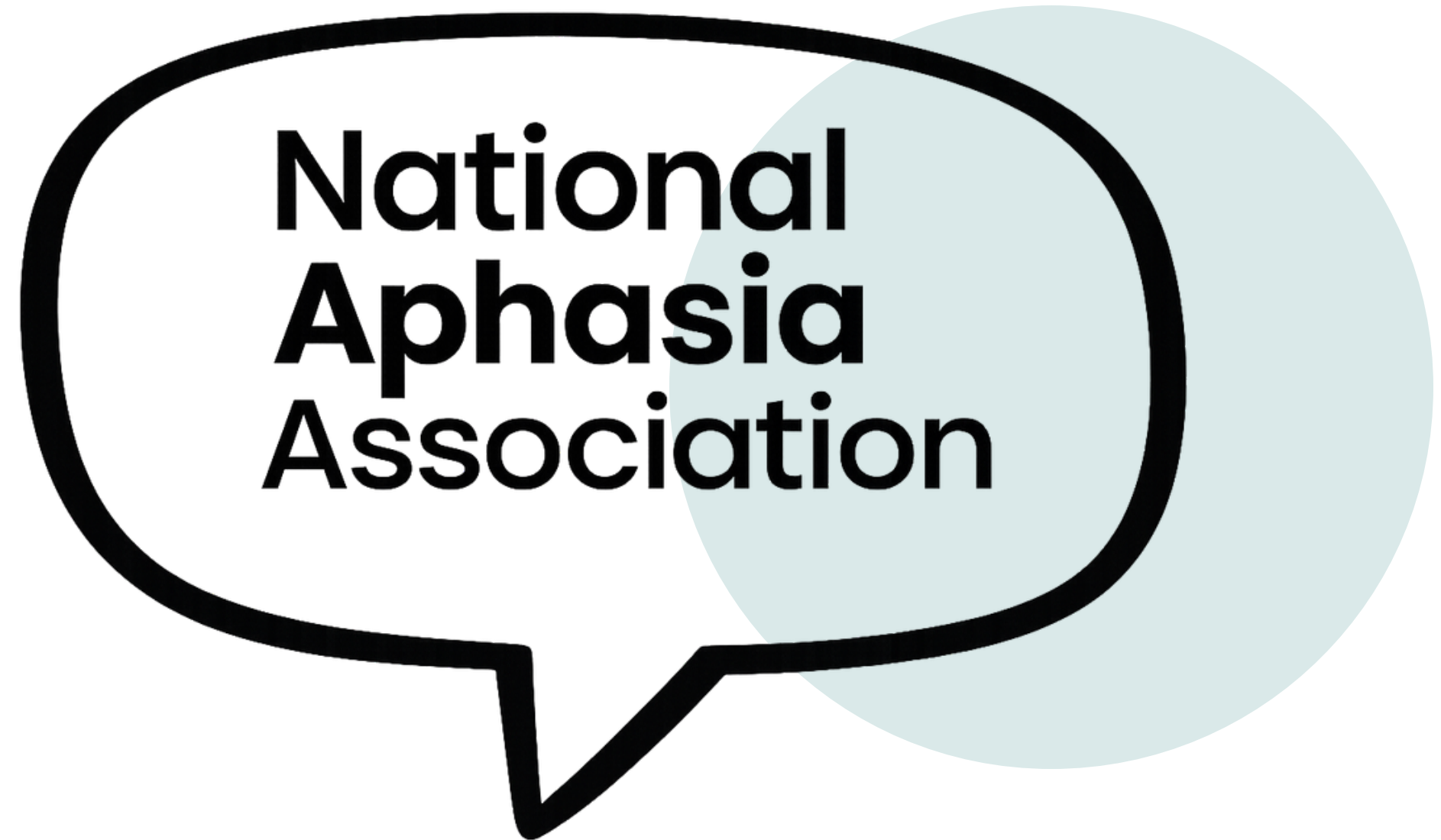
Free Resources from the NAA



The NAA is here to help you:

- NAA Group Directory listing
- Aphasia awareness materials
- Communication tips handouts
- Webinars and training videos
- Social media graphics
- Aphasia Awareness Month toolkit
- Connection to other group leaders
- Ambassador Program support

Visit aphasia.org for all resources.





Ready to Start?

Your readiness checklist:

- ✓ I know why I want to start a group
- ✓ I've checked the NAA directory
- ✓ I have a meeting space or virtual capacity
- ✓ I have a day and time picked
- ✓ I know how to reach potential members
- ✓ I have a plan for my first meeting
- ✓ I've connected with the NAA

You're ready.

Your community is waiting.

LET'S
DO
THIS