



Life's a Conversation

2025 Canadian Stroke Best Practices Released

The **2025 (7th Edition) Canadian Stroke Best Practices – Recommendations for Rehabilitation, Recovery, and Community Participation following Stroke** were released on November 21, 2025.

We know that many of you don't have time to read lengthy guideline documents in full, so we have highlighted a few key updates that are **relevant to improving rehabilitation services for people with aphasia**.

What's New

Three new sets of recommendations are now available on the [Heart and Stroke Canadian Stroke Best Practices Recommendations](#) website and published in the American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation.

Part One: Stroke Rehabilitation Planning for Optimal Care Delivery

Part Two: Delivery of Stroke Rehabilitation to Optimize Functional Recovery

Part Three: Optimizing Activity and Community Participation Following Stroke

As aphasia service providers, educators, and advocates, we were encouraged to see that these recommendations strongly endorse a person-centred approach to stroke rehabilitation, with explicit attention to communication needs across the entire continuum of care.

Key Highlights for Aphasia Care in Rehab

1. Training on Communication Disorders and Supported Conversation

Across the continuum of care, healthcare providers are recommended to receive training in communication disorders and the use of supported conversation strategies. Importantly, training is also recommended for other communication partners, including family members.



2. Clear Responsibility to Provide Aphasia-Friendly Information

The recommendations endorse adapting both verbal and written information to be aphasia-friendly. This includes tailoring assessment tools, shared decision-making plans, goal setting, and discharge planning to the individual's communication abilities

NOTE: We recognize that what qualifies as “aphasia-friendly” — and how to create it — isn't always clear. The Aphasia Institute is currently developing best-practice guidance for clinicians, and we look forward to sharing this soon.



3. A Broader Definition of Stroke Rehabilitation Aligned with Life Participation

Stroke rehabilitation is described as optimizing physical, cognitive, emotional, communicative, and social functioning levels. In the chronic stage of stroke, the recommendations also emphasize “maintaining current functional abilities” and the “prevention of or slowing of functional decline and secondary health conditions”. This framing strongly supports a [life participation approach](#) to communication services.



4. Strong Emphasis on Community and Social Participation

Finally, the recommendations highlight the vital role of social participation in stroke recovery. Given the association between aphasia, social withdrawal, and reduced quality of life, the emphasis on individualized plans and interventions that support access to social activities and community-based aphasia services is particularly welcome.



5. Virtual Care

Access to virtual care (e.g., videoconferencing, telephone, and other technology-enabled services) is endorsed to increase opportunities to engage in rehabilitation, with specific recognition of its benefit for individuals with post-stroke aphasia and communication impairments.



Call to Action

All healthcare providers working with people after stroke can help create more communicatively accessible care experiences by aligning their practice with the new Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations.

The **Aphasia Institute** can support you in these efforts by offering:

✅ [Introduction to SCA™](#) - a free e-learning module ideal for onboarding, refreshers, and new learners

💻 [Aphasia-friendly online content](#) about aphasia for people living with aphasia and their conversation partners

🎓 [Professional Training & Custom Education](#) programs, including custom training options for teams

🧰 [Practical resources for patients and to support communication with patients](#), some of which are free to Ontario clinicians, with additional resources available through cost-recovery.

Impact of Effective Communication in Healthcare for People with Aphasia

A [recent study](#) illustrated the differences in stroke rehabilitation outcomes for patients with aphasia. The results underscored the need for equitable access to care through better communication between healthcare providers and people with aphasia.