

Project Aphasia #07-15

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Single-Year Project

Section I : Overview

1. Area of Concern

People with aphasia (PWAs) face many challenges in their everyday lives. According to numerous studies from speech therapists and researchers, PWAs face social stigma, suffer from a lack of understanding from the public towards them and adverse emotional impacts including psychological distress and depression, which also affects their caregivers.

Over 2500 people are diagnosed with aphasia in Singapore annually. As a result of an ageing population, aphasia is becoming an increasingly prevalent issue in Singapore.

2. Challenges Identified

We have identified 3 problems we want to address:

1. Lack of awareness for our beneficiary, Aphasia SG
2. Lack of understanding about PWAs
3. PWAs lack self confidence, resulting in isolation from society

3. Underlying Problem

Given that PWAs are ostracised from society and lose their sense of independence, resulting in emotional problems such as loneliness, how might we raise more awareness about Aphasia and have a positive impact on the PWAs, so as to build an Aphasia-friendly society where PWAs feel included?

4. Plan of Action

We will be working with Aphasia SG to help with outreach and coordinating events.

We aim to take a three-pronged approach:

- Raising awareness for PWAs
- Attending regular interaction sessions
- Providing opportunities for public interaction with PWAs

5. Implementation of Action Plan

Date	Action	Objective
January - April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaising with Aphasia SG 2. Setting up Instagram page, Introduction of Core Team <p>Biweekly interaction sessions</p>	Understanding what Aphasia is and identifying challenges PWAs face
May	<p><u>Instagram Publicity</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First series of posts about raising awareness on Aphasia <p>Biweekly interaction sessions</p>	Educating people about Aphasia
June	<p><u>Human Library</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Held online on 3 June from 8 - 9:15pm 2. Over 60 participants attended the event 3. Co-Organised with Aphasia SG 4. Invited a PWA and an Aphasia SG volunteer to share their experiences <p><u>Choose Your Own Adventure (Aphasia Edition)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Held online on 19 June from 3 - 4:30pm 2. Over 70 participants attended the event 	<p>Educating people on how Aphasia affects the community</p> <p>Showcasing the struggles PWAs face</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Co-Organised with Aphasia SG Youth Chapter 4. Attendees participated in a Choose Your Own Adventure game, where everyone was put in the shoes of a PWA 5. Attendees were split into breakout rooms at several junctures to discuss about the choices they made and life as a PWA <p>Biweekly interaction sessions</p>	
	<p><u>Past vs Present (Mandarin Chit Chat)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Held online on 5 June from 10:30-11:30am 2. Project members organised a Mandarin game show under the theme “Past vs Present” 3. PWAs played games including the Price is Right and Never Have I Ever, regarding past and present school life <p><u>Past vs Present (English Chit Chat)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Held online on 12 June from 10:30-11:30am 2. Project members organised an English game show under the theme “Past vs Present” 3. PWAs played games including the 	<p>Provide PWAs with an opportunity to express themselves</p>

	Price is Right and Spot It, regarding past and present school life	
July	<p><u>Lesson about Aphasia for Primary School Children</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Held online on 19 July from 1:30-2:30pm 2. Collaboration with Project Genesis 3. Participants learnt about Aphasia and how to communicate with a PWA 4. Participants played games to experience what it's like to have Aphasia <p>Biweekly interaction sessions</p>	Raise awareness amongst the youth

Section II : Project Outcomes

1. Accomplishments

Over the course of our awareness raising events, we have reached out to over **500 people**, who have learnt about and interacted with PWAs. Additionally, our series of Instagram posts educating users about Aphasia and PWAs have been received by a following of over **950 followers**. Through our biweekly interaction sessions, we have impacted **55 PWAs**, bringing joy into their lives. In a letter of recognition, our beneficiary commended us for **impacting the lives of PWAs, volunteering our time** to help out at Aphasia SG outreach events and **helping to raise awareness among the youth**.

2. Reflections

Project Aphasia allowed us to interact with people suffering from this invisible yet pertinent condition. Indeed, PWAs look like normal elderly, but embarking on this project has opened our eyes to a surprisingly common yet unknown condition of Aphasia. We saw the true struggle PWAs face daily, and how the inability to effectively communicate can hinder their capability to live a normal daily life. As such, we are glad that we were able to partner up with Aphasia SG to make a difference in the lives of PWAs, bringing about a little laughter through our interactions with them. Patience does indeed go a long way. Through our experiences with them, we managed to learn so much about their lives, albeit through a mixture of hand signals and spoken words. We had many 'heart to heart' talks with them, and uncovered many of their daily struggles, struggles we never knew plagued so many people's lives. We are glad that through our combined efforts, we succeeded in making a positive impact in the lives of these PWAs, and contributed towards building a more Aphasia friendly society.

3. Scope of Impact

Community impact:

Members of the public could learn more about PWAs and their daily struggles. We hope that the public are more aware of the prevalence of PWAs in Singapore, and that they can continue to support Aphasia SG in creating an Aphasia-friendly society for all.

Community Involvement:

Our 5 core team members enlisted the help from our beneficiary, consisting of around 40 volunteers, who were key to the facilitation of both the interaction sessions and our events. Through the interaction sessions, we have given PWAs a safe platform to hone their communication skills and regain confidence in communicating with others. We managed to regularly interact with over 50 PWAs, making a positive impact on their lives.

Resolution of AOC/UP:

Given that we have identified a lack of awareness for PWAs, we have raised awareness about PWAs to more than 500 members of the public through our various publicity events. We hope that we have managed to make a positive impact on and empower PWAs through our interaction sessions. We hope that our efforts have helped sow the seeds for a more aphasia-friendly Singapore.