

Wernicke's Aphasia Progression

Everyone is different and their progression may not follow this timeline precisely. Wernicke's aphasia is a posterior aphasia that affects the phonological (word sounds) system. You will not have apraxia (motor speech disorder) with this type of aphasia. Speech and writing will be similarly affected, as will understanding and reading. Wernicke's aphasia requires a different therapy approach than non-fluent aphasia.

Severe

Very confused, little understanding of written/ spoken information. May have no speech or garbled/nonsensical speech.

May have some physical weakness in arm or leg.

Less confusion. Any physical issues may have lessened (remaining hand weakness).

May get frustrated due to poor understanding.

Understanding is still difficult except for highly-contextual situations ("Do you want salt on that?" while eating).

Speech is fluent (more than 5 words at a time) but largely gibberish (neologisms).

Makes sound errors in words (consused = confused).

Intermediate

Speech has normal intonation and rhythm but remains largely nonsense. Understanding and awareness may be improving in daily life activities.

Has difficulty understanding therapy tasks and switching activities.

As understanding improves, patient may begin to understand that what he is saying is not what he thinks he's saying.

There may be larger pockets of intelligible and relevant words (you can understand them and they make sense given the moment).

Moderate/Mild

Understanding continues to improve. Patient receives good input, may begin to repeat or "echo" spoken sounds during conversation or read aloud single words.

He may also begin to purposefully repeat words and use written cues more reliably.

As speech relevance and intelligibility improves, the patient receives more and more good input (written and spoken information) during daily life situations that help continually improve speech and writing.

More speech makes sense and uses real words appropriately.

The aphasia may progress into a different type of fluent aphasia - anomia. All people with aphasia have anomia, where they can speak in sentences but have problems with finding specific words.

Example: Yesterday we ended up at the ___?

Anomia is the mildest form of aphasia.

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