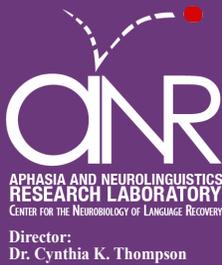


# SUMMER 2016 NEWSLETTER



## Newsletter Contents:

Lab News & Updates .....	1
Community & Current Events.....	2
People to Know & Support Group Information.....	3
Activities Corner.....	4

## ‘Constant Therapy’ Brings New Light to Brain Injury Recovery

by Allie Elwell

Speech and language therapy is rapidly changing and growing to better support the recovery of people with aphasia. One of the most important aspects of language recovery in people with aphasia is the need for practice, practice, and more practice. A new app for aphasia treatment is now allowing people with aphasia to work from home. Constant Therapy uses scientifically driven, effective, language and cognitive tasks, which can be personalized by your therapist. For example, modules for Treatment of Underlying forms, developed and tested in the Aphasia and Neurolinguistics Research Laboratory at Northwestern, are now being developed for Constant Therapy.

Created by a team of engineers, researchers, and clinicians at Boston University, this app provides over 60,000 tasks for people with brain injury to practice on their cell phone, computer, or tablet. The therapy goals targeted in sessions with clinicians can then be practiced anywhere - perfect for homework, travel, and breaks in therapy. During its development, Constant Therapy was tested with people with stroke and brain injury, and revised based on feedback from them. This makes the app easy to use and understand

for people with all levels of language difficulty. Importantly, early research on the app has already shown improvement in language, cognitive, and executive functioning ability.

Clinicians have found this app to be very beneficial in treating their clients with aphasia and cognitive difficulties for a variety of reasons. Homework tasks that coincide with treatment goals can be assigned. Therapy tasks can be changed and increased in level of difficulty. Clinicians can track their client’s progress while the client uses the app in various locations.

Constant Therapy can be downloaded at the Apple Store, Google Play Store, or on the Amazon App Store. It is free for clinicians to download and use with people with aphasia during treatment sessions. Constant Therapy provides a 30-day free trial of tasks and activities and can then be purchased on a monthly or yearly basis.

Constant Therapy is now being used in the new Aphasia Center at Northwestern and in the Center for Audiology, Speech, Language, and Learning (CASLL) to help people with aphasia.

## Northwestern Aphasia Center Celebrates its Grand Opening with Open House Event

The new Aphasia Center at Northwestern University celebrated with an Open House in early May. The special event featured research discussions, clinical demonstrations, and tours of the facility.

Presentations by guest speakers included the history and development of the Aphasia Center by Dr. Cynthia Thompson (Director of the NU Aphasia Lab and Center for the Neurobiology of Language Recovery), an overview of aphasia, its causes, and a multidisciplinary approach to managing it by Drs. Borna Bonakdarpour and Darby Morhardt of the Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center at Northwestern, and the NU Aphasia Support Group by Edu-

ardo Europa (NU Aphasia Lab member and doctoral candidate).

An overview of the various groups that the Center offers was presented by NU Clinical Faculty, Belma Hadziselimovic and Aaron Wilkins, along with guided demonstrations from leaders of the Exercise and Music groups. The event concluded with two guest speakers, both Aphasia Center members, sharing their insights as participants in the Aphasia Center’s clubs and workshops.

If you would like additional information about the Aphasia Center, please contact the Center at 847-491-3165 or [nucasll@northwestern.edu](mailto:nucasll@northwestern.edu).

# COMMUNITY & CURRENT EVENTS

## COMMUNITY EVENTS:

### -----June:-----

#### **Grant Park Summer Music Festival**

June 15<sup>th</sup>-Aug 20<sup>th</sup>

Ten weeks of outdoor classical concerts. Free.

#### **Women's Funny Festival**

June 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>

Showcasing comedy from the country's best and brightest female performers.

#### **Puerto Rican Festival and Parade**

June 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>

Features live music, food, arts and crafts, carnival rides, and more.

### -----July:-----

#### **Chicago Botanic Garden Art Festival**

July 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>

Celebrating art and nature with over 95 artists' work sprawling 385+ acres.

#### **Taste of Chicago**

July 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>

Showcasing Chicago's rich and diverse culinary menu with over 35 booths and 15 one-day pop-up tents.

#### **Irish American Heritage Festival**

July 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>

Live Irish music, dancing, family fun, and more. Featuring over 100 performers.

### -----August:-----

#### **Chicago Summerfest**

August 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>

Local craft vendors, live music and a variety of delicious foods.

#### **Air and Water Show**

August 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>

Featuring coordinated

stunts, parachute exhibitions, water ballets and diving competitions.

### -----September:-----

#### **Chicago Jazz Festival**

September 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

From nationally touring ensembles to home-grown maestros, the festival runs the gamut of performers and also oscillates between all forms of jazz. Free.

#### **African Festival of the Arts**

September 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

Includes live music, arts and crafts, food and more.

#### **World Music Festival**

September 9<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>

A city-wide event offering an array of contemporary and traditional music from professional musicians around the world. Free.

### -----October:-----

#### **International Film Festival**

October 13<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>

Over 150 films in all genres from more than 60 different countries.

### -----November:-----

#### **Magnificent Mile Lights Festival**

November 19<sup>th</sup>

Offers family-friendly attractions, concerts, a grand Tree-Lighting Parade, fireworks, and more.

#### **Thanksgiving Parade**

November 24<sup>th</sup>

Features giant balloons, floats, thousands of performers and marching bands.



## IN THE NEWS:

***New research suggests that looking at structures in the right side of the brain may help predict who will better recover from language problems after a stroke.***

The study suggests that the right side of the brain reorganizes itself to help recover language and speech-motor functions (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/03/160330184236.htm>).

***UC Berkeley scientists have created the first semantic atlas of the brain by mapping the meanings associated with basic words onto the cortex.*** The findings, described in the journal *Nature*, provide an unprecedented view of language and meaning as it plays out on our neural terrain, and could potentially offer a road map to help patients with certain types of aphasia or other neurological disorders (<http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-brain-atlas-language-20160427-story.html>).

***Research provides important new insights into beginning stages of primary progressive aphasia (PPA).***

Using a special imaging technique, Northwestern Medicine scientists have discovered the toxic build-up of amyloid protein is greater on the left side of the brain -- the site of language processing -- than on the right side in many individuals living with PPA (<http://www.news-medical.net/news/20160308/Research-provides-important-new-insights-into-beginning-stages-of-primary-progressive-aphasia.aspx>).

***Taking aspirin immediately after a mini-stroke significantly reduces the risk of a major stroke, a new study suggests.*** The new study included data from about 56,000 people. The researchers found that taking aspirin after a mini-stroke (also called a transient ischemic attack, or TIA) reduced the risk of a disabling or fatal stroke over the next few days and weeks by 70-80% (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/why-aspirin-after-a-mini-stroke-could-be-a-lifesaver/>).

# PEOPLE TO KNOW & SUPPORT GROUP INFO

## MIN LIAO, POSDOCTORAL FELLOW

Min is a post-doctoral fellow in the Aphasia Lab. She received a M.A. in Linguistics from Beijing Language and Culture University in China and obtained her Ph.D. in Linguistics at Macquarie University in Australia.

Aphasia research in China is just at the starting stage. Compared with the large number of aphasia tests available in English, there is a paucity of standardized assessment tools for the Chinese population. Min Liao is involved in adapting English-based diagnostic tests and treatment to Mandarin Chinese.

Min loves cooking and travelling. The truth is, since Min's been here, walking and shopping have been her only activities outside of work. At the time of this writing, she has been in the US for 4176 hours and has bought 4 hats, 5 bags, 7 shoes, 4 skirts, 5 pants, 8 blouses, and 11 dresses (not to mention unmentionables). That works out to one article of clothing every 94 hours 54 minutes and 6 seconds. That's a world record pace! She should get a medal for it!

Min dreams that one day she will be able to afford all the stuff she likes, she could cook for the people she loves, and she could contribute to aphasia research and the people with aphasia!



## APHASIA SUPPORT GROUP UPDATES:

### Past Meetings:

In support group this year, we've been talking about what it's really like to have aphasia. In January, we used slips of paper with emotions written on them to help us discuss what we're feeling in our lives right now, with or without aphasia. In February, we were joined by Maria Ugarte-Ramos, the founder of the FAMA Bilingual Center for Family Caregivers, who gave a talk and discussion about what it is like and what it means to be a caregiver for someone with aphasia. In March and April we worked on a long-term project together in honor of Aphasia Awareness Month (June). Together we are creating a collaborative work about what it's like to have aphasia, according to the people who actually have it and their caregivers. We are hoping to spread understanding about what aphasia is really like.

### Upcoming Meetings:

June 2<sup>nd</sup>

July 7<sup>th</sup>

September 1<sup>st</sup>

October 6<sup>th</sup>

November 3<sup>rd</sup>

December 1<sup>st</sup>

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

Aphasia Support Group Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month from 12pm to 1pm in Room 1-530 (Center for Audiology, Speech, Language, & Learning- 2315 Campus Drive). Please contact Kat Bovbjerg for more info at 847-467-7591 or [cnlr@northwestern.edu](mailto:cnlr@northwestern.edu)

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

The lab is located three blocks east of the Noyes Stop on the Purple Line.

CTA: 1-888-968-7282  
[www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com)

RTA: 1-312-836-7000  
[www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com)

### **Do you have a story to tell?**

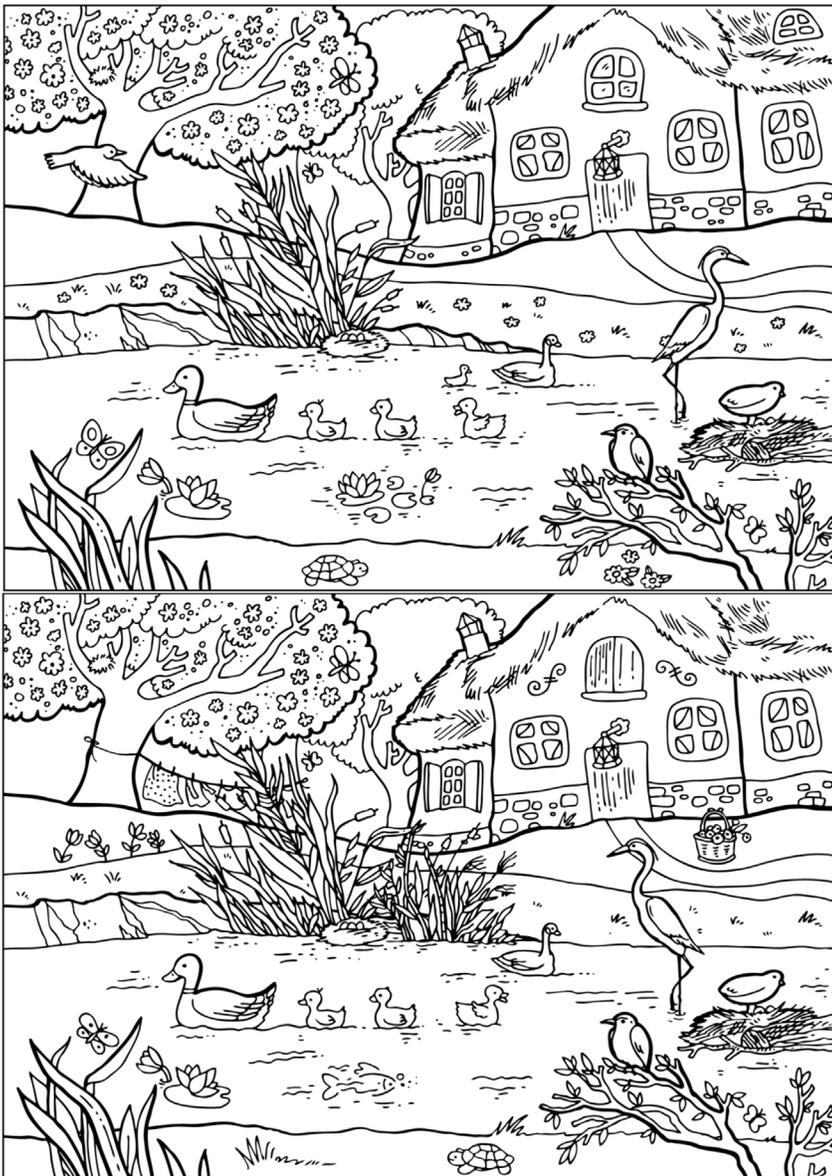
We'd like to know!

If you would like submit a piece to be featured in an upcoming ANRL newsletter, please contact Sarah, Kat, or Brienne at 847-467-7591. Possible topics include: tips and advice, hobbies (e.g. cooking, crafts, etc.), health, research, and your personal experience with aphasia.

# ACTIVITIES CORNER

## Find the Differences!

## Sudoku Puzzles



		3		9	2			
4				3				1
2	7							
	1		3					8
	5		1	6	7			3
3					8		6	
							5	3
	3			8				9
			6	2		1		
	8					2		
				8	4			9
		6	3	2				1
	9	7						8
8			9		3			2
	1					9	5	
	7			4	5	8		
	3		7	1				
		8						4

## Stretch Your Mind

Use this exercise to warm-up or refresh your mental muscles, anytime during the day. Complete some or all of the following seven steps. If you can, try saying them out loud. Do each as quickly as you can.

1. Count backwards from 100 to zero.
2. Recite the alphabet, assigning a word for each letter (like, "A, apple; B, ball; etc.").
3. List 20 names of men you know, assigning a number to each ("1, Brian, 2, Pete, etc.").
4. Do the same thing as #3, but list 20 women you know assigning a number to each.
5. Name and number 20 foods ("1, burger, 2, cookies, etc.").
6. Choose one letter of the alphabet and name 20 words that begin with that letter AND number them. ("1, news, 2 nice, etc.").
7. Close your eyes and count to 20 slowly, then open them.