Aphasia

After a stroke (brain attack), some people may have language problems, called aphasia. Aphasia usually occurs when the stroke affects the right side of the body.

Aphasia can affect all language areas – speaking, understanding, reading and writing – in varying degrees.

The patient’s intelligence has not decreased ... aphasia is a language problem.

For better communication with a patient who has aphasia:

• Work closely with the speech language pathologist and follow your home program.
• Use simple, direct statements; it may be difficult for the patient to understand long sentences.
• Ask short questions that require only a “yes” or “no” answer.
• Gesture when you speak.
• Talk about familiar subjects.
• Encourage the patient to use family members’ names and say “hello” and “goodbye” and other social exchanges.
• Set up a structured, daily routine to increase the patient’s sense of independence.

The abilities of a person with aphasia may be different from day to day or even morning to night, so don’t be surprised.

Remember: Someone with aphasia is neither “feeble minded” nor “mentally incompetent.” Treat the person as a mature adult, and as much as possible, include them in life-affecting decisions.

Source: American Heart Association