

Critical Review:
Efficacy of Group Therapy versus Individual Therapy in Making Impairment Related Gains in People with Aphasia

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This review examines the published evidence comparing group therapy and individual therapy in making impairment related gains in people with aphasia. Group therapy has the potential to increase SLP service provision to a larger number of people in need, thus decreasing costs and wait-lists, and allowing therapy to begin sooner after stroke. However, this is only feasible and ethical if group therapy is found to be better than, or equal to, the gains made in traditional one-on-one therapy. The purpose of the current study is to examine all available research in this area to determine if group therapy is a viable replacement for individual therapy in clients with aphasia. Five primary research articles were found to directly compare the intervention methods in adults with aphasia. The findings of this review are mixed, with limited compelling research supporting efficacy of either treatment delivery model over the other. More research is needed directly comparing the two treatment delivery models before conclusive results can be drawn.

Introduction

After a stroke, approximately 38% of those who survive experience aphasia (Allen, Mehta, & McClure, 2012). Aphasia is a language impairment that impacts life participation due to its effects on language across all settings. It is usually targeted with conventional one-on-one speech and language intervention by a speech-language pathologist (SLP). This type of speech-language therapy has been found to be beneficial in improving language outcomes in aphasic patients (Brady, Kelly, Godwin & Enderby, 2016).

Therapy for select aphasia patients can also be administered using a group service delivery model. Group therapy is often seen as a beneficial intervention to primarily promote generalization of

language impairment measures and ratings of functional language by significant others, both groups had similar improvement.

The limitations of this study included high drop-out rates and inappropriate statistical analysis on data. Thus, it provides only equivocal evidence that group therapy and individual therapy are equally effective.

Avent, Wertz and Auther (1998) explored the relationship between language impairment and pragmatic behaviour in aphasic adults in a retrospective RCT study conducted on Wertz et al.'s (1981) original article data. The authors aimed to evaluate performance in both pragmatics and communicative effectiveness after group-

was still limited to fluent aphasia and BOX semantic therapy (Wilssens et al., 2015).

The strength of other findings is questionable due to high dropout rates (Wertz et al., 1981), potential confounding variables (Wertz et al., 1981; Fama et al., 2016), age of studies (Avent et al., 1998; Wertz et al., 1981

