

Podcast Listening Groups

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Background

- There are over 800,000 podcasts and over 50 million individual podcast episodes, with more all the time. Each week, 62 million Americans listen to podcasts (Adgate, 2019).
- As a medium, podcasts are an increasingly important part of the national conversation.
- Many people with aphasia have never listened to a podcast.
- The Podcast Listening Group was inspired by the ACC's Book Connection™ program.

Structure

- 8 weekly 75-minute sessions
- Groups of 7-9 participants with mild-moderate auditory comprehension deficits
- Participants receive an email a week before each session with a link to the assigned podcast, an aphasia-friendly written summary, and a transcript. They listen in advance on their own.
- In addition, each week, 1-2 participants present a podcast they've listened to independently.

Preparation

- Preparing supporting materials and discussion questions takes 1-2 hours per session.
- Tips for choosing podcasts: They should spark good conversation and include a variety of topics, podcast styles, and levels of challenge. The ideal length is 30-40 minutes. Podcasts with fewer speakers, a slower pace, less background music, and minimal ambient noise will be more accessible. Podcasts that focus on a single story generally work better. Accents and dialects can be challenging for some participants.
- Transcripts are an essential support. Most podcasts don't provide them. Third-party and computer-generated transcripts are sometimes available on the web, but are generally poor quality. Look for podcasts that provide their own transcripts. Many—but not all—podcasts produced by bigger media companies (e.g., NPR, New York Times, Gimlet, RadioTopia) have transcripts.

Listening

- There are two ways to listen to podcasts: streaming and downloading.
 - Streaming is much easier. Participants simply click a link and listen online using a phone, computer, or tablet.
 - Downloading instructions vary from app to app and device to device.
- Some podcast websites (e.g., RadioPublic, iHeartRadio) and most smartphone apps allow playback at ½ speed. No one at the ACC who has tried this adaptation has continued to use it.
- Tips from ACC podcast group participants: listen without distractions, use headphones, read the summary and/or transcript first, listen more than once, take a break, take notes.

Discussion and Presentations

- The majority of the session is devoted to discussing the assigned podcast, which members listened to as homework. The facilitator brings discussion questions and supporting visuals to share via Zoom.
- Participants take turns presenting podcasts they've chosen and listened to independently. One or two members present each week. Presentations last 10-15 minutes, with time for questions and discussion. Some members email keywords or links for their presentation in advance to be shared via Zoom.
- Provide an annotated list of suggested podcasts. Include a description and link, and indicate whether transcripts are available. Some members may need more targeted recommendations.

"Since I had never used a podcast before, it opened a whole new world for me." – ACC podcast group participant