

Choral singing can help people living with aphasia

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This research was conducted by **Jeanette Tamplin and four others** at the **University of Melbourne, Royal Melbourne Hospital and Monash University, Australia**

Summary

Group singing has been shown to have a beneficial impact on mood and sociability in a diverse range of therapeutic contexts, with positive outcomes for stress reduction, confidence and communication. Consequently, researchers in Australia decided to explore the benefits of attending a community choir for a group of 20 participants living with aphasia following a stroke. Aphasia (the inability to understand or express speech) is a common consequence of suffering a stroke. The choir was led by a neurological music therapist, and assisted by volunteers. Over 12 weeks the choir prepared material for a concert for family and friends. The research concluded that for people with stroke-related aphasia, singing in a choir can have 'a positive effect on mood, increase confidence, establish peer support networks, increase motivation and impact on communication ability'.

Group singing seems like a viable therapy for people with aphasia

Aphasia poses specific communicative challenges that can lead to depression and anxiety and also encourage social withdrawal. There is evidence people with aphasia retain the ability to sing. Singing activities take the focus away from verbal communication, and importantly, the group atmosphere offers an opportunity for social interaction. Improved speech intelligibility has been reported amongst people with stroke-related aphasia during choral singing.

One participant described feeling 'elated' when singing; another felt more relaxed than normal

Participating in the choir also helped people to regain their confidence in everyday social situations. Whilst acknowledging a limited pool of participants, the researchers hope that this study will encourage further work in this area. The report includes practical information for those wishing to develop similar choirs.

This summary is by **Richard Mason, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

performance therapy Australia singing stroke

Title	'Stroke a Chord': The effect of singing in a community choir on mood and social engagement for people living with aphasia following a stroke
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Author email	jeanette.tamplin@austin.org.au

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