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Aphasia and Related Disorders

“Aphasia is a language problem, not a speech problem.”

Frederic L. Darley

CHAPTER PREVIEW

This chapter defines and describes the neurogenic communication disorders of aphasia, apraxia of speech, dysarthrias, and the language of reduced or impaired consciousness seen in some people with traumatic brain injuries. This chapter discusses the etiology of aphasia, the brain-mind leap, language and symbolism, and brain localization issues. Emphasized is the importance of all health care professionals to address the psychology of aphasia and related disorders in therapies and treatments. There is a general overview of the three major psychological issues in aphasia to be discussed in this book: the effects of brain injury, psychological defense mechanisms and coping styles, and the grief response. Quality-of-life issues are defined, including their critical domains, and emphasizing psychological issues, changes, and challenges for people with aphasia.

THE “BIG THREE NEUROGENIC” COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

The “Big Three” communication disorders resulting from injury to the brain and/or nervous system are aphasia, apraxia of speech, and the dysarthrias. While these disorders can occur alone, they are often seen together. They are further divided into those that impair the fabric of language (aphasia) and those that are primarily motor speech disorders (apraxia of speech and the dysarthrias). As will be discussed below, aphasia refers to absent or impaired language functions, apraxia of speech is the impaired ability to program and execute neuromotor commands, and the dysarthrias are a collection of paralytic and movement neuromuscular disorders.

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