Outside the Home

Dining at a restaurant, shopping for groceries, traveling to visit a new place, or running errands in nearby stores can be more difficult when you have aphasia. This is what people with aphasia would like the service industry to know.

How often do you go to a restaurant or get carryout from a restaurant?

How difficult do you find going to new restaurants (places where you don't know the menu) on a scale from 1 - 10 (with 10 being very hard and 1 being easy)?
Do you tend to go back to the same restaurants over and over again?

- **Yes** 39.7%
- **No** 1.5%
- **Sometimes** 58.8%

What makes you return to a restaurant?

- Delicious food 75%
- Close to home 50%
- Good price for the food and service 25%
- Easy to order (especially with aphasia) 0%

When going to a new restaurant, do you look at the menu beforehand and think about what you'll order?

- Yes 44.6%
- Just a glance 15.4%
- Sometimes 26.2%
- No 13.8%
Would you be more likely to try an interesting restaurant if you knew their staff had gone through a training and were "aphasia friendly"?

What do you wish restaurant owners and waitstaff knew about aphasia so you could have a better experience?

Be patient.

Wait while I am talking!

Explain what is in the dish. Use pictures. Speak slowly.

I don’t want to be ignored because my server is afraid.

I may not be able to speak, but I can point to my choice. I always have someone who can assist as well and communicate for me.

I wish they would speak slowly and in short sentences. Be patient and look at me.

Listen to me when I have to speak again because I couldn’t find a word or used the wrong word.

Patient waitstaff should speak slowly and avoid rushed orders. Restaurants should have easy access (around tables, entrances, and restrooms) and lower music volumes.

Add pictures of food on the menu, make bathrooms accessible and clean, teach staff to be patient—it takes me a while to share my order.

Sometimes I just need more time. It’s nice to have friendly service, too.

Speak slower, try not to ask additional questions such as, "Would you like so or so on the side?" Side note: I love it that we buy food to go so I can practice ordering and eat in my home where there is less stimulation—visual, auditory.

While servers often need to move quickly to accommodate other customers, we need more time and patience with ordering and questions.
How difficult do you find navigating grocery stores on a scale from 1 - 10 (with 10 being super hard and 1 being easy)?

How often do you go to the grocery store or use a grocery delivery service?
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Have you ever used a grocery store delivery service?

- Yes, with delivery: 4.8%
- Yes, but I pick up: 16.7%
- Interested: 9.5%
- No option in my area: 4.8%
- Do not want: 64.3%

What makes a good shopping trip?

- First, I want to try new things: 75%
- Items are always in the same place: 50%
- Items are easy to find: 25%
- Can use the store app: 0%
- Kind, patient, helpful staff: 0%
- Items on my list are on sale: 0%
- Items are always in the same place: 75%

Do you make a list before you go?

- Yes: 58.1%
- Sometimes: 32.6%
- No: 9.3%
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Would you be more likely to shop at a certain grocery store if you knew their staff had gone through a training and were "aphasia friendly"?

What do you wish grocery store staff knew about aphasia so you could have a better experience?

Cleaner bathrooms! I would like something to be able to hold as I walk around the store (a walker) or a wheelchair.

More help with the deli. I always mess up my order, and maybe it would help to look at all the meat before they cut it.

I need help sometimes reaching items that are on high shelves. It’s hard for me to tell them what I need. Please be patient.

Keep items in the same place and lower the music volume so I can think straight. I do use a pickup service. However, I need to go into the store sometimes as well.

Speak slowly with simple words. Repeat their words.

They need to know how difficult it is to be able to remember what you are looking for even if you do have a list!

They will wait for a response and maybe go slower and repeat what they say.
How difficult do you find traveling on a scale from 1 - 10 (with 10 being super hard and 1 being easy)?

How often did you travel (more than an hour away) before the pandemic OR how often do you think you will travel after the pandemic?
Do you enjoy traveling?

- Yes: 73.1%
- No: 3.8%
- Not new areas: 23.1%

What makes a good trip?
- Can see new places: 75%
- Can try new restaurants: 50%
- Can stay with family or friends: 25%
- Can stay in a hotel with helpful staff: 0%
- Get to take a train: 75%
- Get to fly on a plane: 50%
- Get to take a long drive: 25%
- Scenery: 0%

What stops you from traveling?
- Cost: 75%
- Too hard to get around: 50%
- Too hard to figure out new place: 25%
- Scared: 0%
- Bad experience—hotel: 50%
- Bad experience—train or plane: 25%
- Bad experience—rain or plane: 0%

No, I like staying home. Well, I like visiting people I know and love, but I don’t like going to new areas. Yes, I love exploring new places!
Would you be more likely to travel if you knew the staff at the hotel or on the train/plane had gone through a training and were "aphasia friendly"?

What do you wish hotel and transportation staff knew about aphasia so you could have a better experience?

I educate the staff myself! I let them know that I have trouble speaking, and you have to speak to me slowly! Slow down! Patience! Speak clearly. Aphasia is a loss of language, not intellect.

Please be patient. Give us a chance. We want to communicate.

Talk to me and be patient for me to respond.

Talking slower and listen. Ask questions if they didn’t understand my speech.

Not everyone can speak or listen clearly. Take time and face directly at the customer (me).

Use pictures to help navigate the hotel. Give directions slowly and use gestures.

Wheelchair transfer.
How difficult do you find navigating local stores on a scale from 1 - 10 (with 10 being super hard and 1 being easy)?

Almost never: 25.9%
Sometimes: 63%
Every time I go: 11.1%

How often do you have to ask an employee for help in a store?

- Sometimes: 63%
- Almost never: 25.9%
- Every time I go: 11.1%
Which do you prefer—going to a store or online shopping?

- **Online only**: 11.1%
- **Local only**: 29.6%
- **A mix**: 59.3%

What makes a good shopping trip?

- **Items are easy to find**: 100%
- **Kind, patient, helpful staff**: 75%
- **Items are always in the same place**: 50%
- **Get in and out of the store quickly**: 25%
- **Items on my list are on sale**: 0%
- **Find new things to try**: 50%
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Would you be more likely to shop at a store if you knew their staff had gone through a training and were "aphasia friendly"?

- Yes: 63%
- Maybe: 33.3%
- No: 3.7%

What do you wish store staff knew about aphasia so you could have a better experience?

Anytime the public is aware of a disability, it makes it better. Compassion and patience are important.

I never thought about this before. Most of them probably don’t know what aphasia is.

I tell them immediately that I have a speech issue, and the staff is always very nice and helpful.

Often when I have questions for the store employees, I repeat and repeat myself. Then, when I actually ask the question, most of the time I can’t remember what I want to ask! I find this hilarious. Then I joke with the employee about my sieve-like memory! It helps if the employee is patient with me.

That aphasia affects memory, and we could benefit from their help in finding the things we are looking for.

Always look directly at me and talk slowly.

Visuals on the shelves and aisles. Take time to listen and talk slower.

Yes. I have visited my local food stores for several years. After my stay in the hospital, people had questions. I told them about my aphasia, and they helped me locate items that had been moved. The staff was very encouraging. Plus, they took good guesses when I couldn’t find the name of something I wanted to buy but didn’t have on my list.