

Melinda Corwin, Ph.D.

What is this program?

0:06

So this program is the Summer Arts portion of the STAR program. It's an intensive two week, summer camp or summer program that runs for the first two weeks of June. The program is for stroke survivors, people with primary progressive aphasia, and people who have any type of communication challenge called aphasia.

How does participating in an arts camp help with aphasia?

0:35

So typically, with aphasia, it involves damage on the left side of the brain, which is our language center for spoken and written words. What we do when we use the arts is we're really tapping into the right side of the brain. And we're using the right side to mediate or to help the damaged left side of the brain. And so we use visual arts we use performing arts such as choir singing, acting theatre, and we find that it really helps to promote language and communication.

How long has this program been going on?

1:12

So the Summer Arts program started about 10 years ago. And your we had to stop during COVID during the pandemic, of course, but we're very excited to resume this year. And we're also excited for the first time to partner with the Texas Tech University Talkington College of Visual and Performing Arts.

How have the participants responded to this program?

1:39

So the participants respond very positively. I have one story for you for a man who was at a long term care facility here in town, he was very depressed. The staff reported he wasn't getting up in the mornings wasn't getting out of bed wasn't showering and getting dressed. When he began coming to this summer program. He on his own, woke up every morning, showered, shaved, dressed and was ready to get on the van and come to the Aphasia Summer Arts program. His demeanor changed, His disposition improved, and we hope that we were able to gift him and he's certainly gifted us with his presence.

How have their family members reacted to this program?

2:22

Family members responses are very positive. They typically say that they see an improved disposition or improved mood and demeanor, oftentimes improved communication. And that's one of the things we try to do is provide suggestions for family members and friends of ways that they can communicate with their loved ones who have aphasia.

How are students involved in this program?

2:49

This program involves a total of 16 graduate speech language pathology student, these students are clinicians who are working to become speech language pathologists, many of them will work with

Aphasia when they get out into practice. This is their first time at the summer program and they're doing a wonderful job.

Melinda Corwin

Anything else you would like to add?

3:15

So surviving a stroke is quite challenging. And the most challenging for people with aphasia is social isolation. Friends and family tend to withdraw because they no longer know how to communicate with the person who has aphasia. Yet the person who has aphasia is completely intact intellectually, and wants to socially connect. They just aren't able to speak or write or type like they could before. And so to overcome that is an amazing, amazing thing. And we're excited about the arts and how the arts can help to promote socialization, communication, and overall recovery.