

POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

January 9, 2024

Voices of Hope for Aphasia continues to monitor COVID-19, RSV, and other respiratory infections regularly. We continue to be extremely conservative in making decisions for the health and safety of our members, many of whom fall into the highest at-risk category, but will also weigh the negative effects of isolation against the reduced risks of serious infection to the population.

We will be following guidelines and recommendations from the CDC and local government and reserve the right to make changes to this policy as things change. We also reserve the right to discontinue in-person sessions if we do not feel it is in the best interest and safety of our members, staff, or volunteers.

Our new policy waives vaccination requirements, however; vaccinations continue to be the best way to protect against serious effects of COVID infection. By attending our in-person groups, you acknowledge and accept the risk of exposure to this and any other condition, and will sign a Liability Waiver (below) prior to attending.

This update to our policy shortens the wait-period when returning from a cruise from 5 days to 3 days; however, please use extreme prudence in evaluating your health when determining when to return to our groups.

IN PERSON POLICY:

- Starting on Sept 6th, 2022, we welcomed anyone to our in-person sessions **regardless of vaccination status**. We continue to strongly recommend following CDC and your doctor's recommendations on vaccines.

- Masks are **strongly encouraged** and recommended, especially to those who are not immunized or those who have underlying conditions, but are not required.

Please help keep each other safe and STAY HOME:

- **DO NOT** come to the groups:
 - if you feel achy or any unusual pains,
 - if you are coughing or sneezing,
 - if you are experiencing unusual fatigue,
 - if you have a temperature over 100.1F,
 - if you have unexplained intestinal or other symptoms,
 - if you have participated in activities deemed by the CDC to be moderate-high risk.

- DO NOT COME TO THE GROUPS **If you have been in contact**, within the past 5 days, with someone who is, or may be, ill.

- **CRUISE TRAVEL:** you may **not** participate in group sessions for 3 full days after your return. If your cruise ends on a Saturday, your first possible day at our groups would be Wednesday. **HOWEVER**, please closely monitor yourself and **DO NOT** return to group sessions if you are feeling ill in any way. Help to keep all of our members safe and healthy.

- *We no longer require health checks (health screening form and temperature check). However, we reserve the right to reinstitute them if infection rates in our area increase, or if CDC and Florida Dept of Health guidelines recommend them.*

- Everyone must sign a **COVID-19 Liability Waiver Policy** (below) and the acknowledgement and acceptance of our policies. We make decisions for the health and safety of our members, staff, volunteers, and families, and we depend upon each of you to honor our policy and help us keep each other safe.

PROTOCOLS:

- To limit the number of people within the group rooms, we ask **family members to wait elsewhere**. Exceptions will be made for new members; family may observe and participate in initial sessions.

- We will continue to offer **online sessions**.

- Our center will be **deeply cleaned and disinfected** weekly. All group rooms will be sanitized between each session.

- High quality **air purifiers/filters** with dual HEPA H13 filters will be placed in group meeting rooms.

- **Hand sanitizers** will be made available throughout the center and within the meeting rooms.

- **Masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer** will be made available to those who need them.

- All surfaces and items within the center and group rooms including, doorknobs, chairs, pens, treatment materials, bathroom surfaces, and more will be **cleaned daily**.

In addition, we will **require our members, staff, volunteers, and any other persons** who may need to enter our center to exercise extreme precautions.

We reserve the right to make changes to this policy based on recommendations by the CDC and local government.