



Life's a Conversation

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Aphasia Institute Now Provides Finnish and Swedish Training Curriculum with New Certified Aphasia Institute Trainer

The Aphasia Institute, founded in 1979 by Pat Arato, is a Canadian community-based centre of excellence with an international reputation as a world leader and educator in aphasia.

Through direct service, research, education, and training, we have pioneered programs and practices which help people with aphasia learn how to communicate in new ways and begin to navigate their own lives again.

To date, our training has primarily been based in Canada and taught by Aphasia Institute trainers in English. For the first time, we have partnered with a speech-language pathologist, Elisa Johansson, to develop a Finnish and Swedish curriculum that offers a new perspective for learners. The new curriculum is not simply a direct translation but includes input from conversations with both healthcare providers and people with aphasia to make it more culturally relevant and easily adaptable to Finnish healthcare and social services. Elisa is now our only Certified Aphasia Institute trainer outside of our internal organization.

About the Finnish and Swedish curriculum:

The trainings selected for this pilot are based on the evidence-based Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™) Curriculum that was developed in Canada by the Aphasia Institute. This newly adapted curriculum for Finland has also been translated in Swedish and will be valuable for neighbouring countries Sweden and Norway as the language and cultures are similar. And finally, due to the small population in Finland, the trainings can inform work with other health care populations besides people with aphasia who can benefit from the SCA™ approach.

SCA™ Core: is a 2-day course for all healthcare providers who are involved in communication and client/customer discussion and play a major role in the implementation of communicatively accessible services. This training focuses on SCA™ skills and tools that help support and strengthen conversations.

SCA™ Train the Trainer: is a 1-day advanced training for speech language pathologists (SLPs) who have attended SCA™ Core. The purpose of the training is to guide and encourage SLPs to spread their SCA™ knowledge and skills in their own work communities. The content has been adapted to introduce a uniform Finnish/Swedish vocabulary, operating methods and culturally relevant solutions to barriers. Graduates will receive teaching modules titled, "SCA™ Mini modules" to be able to teach a basic level of SCA™ to their own colleagues.

Aphasia (UH-FAY-ZEE-UH) is a communication disorder, resulting from stroke, brain injury, or brain illness. Although people with aphasia remain competent, aphasia can affect speaking, understanding spoken language, reading, writing, and/or participation in daily conversations.



SCA™ Compact: is a half-day training to all professionals working in social and healthcare services who are working with people with aphasia among other clients/customers. The training is adapted to the Finnish healthcare setting and learning environment taking into account collective learning in teams and fitting into the time constraints of the current healthcare environment. Its purpose is to enable more professionals to start using SCA™. The SCA™ skills built into this course curriculum focuses on good client/customer discussions and implementing services that are accessible.

The Aphasia Institute course curriculum for healthcare professionals is rooted in the Aphasia Institute's Supported Conversation for Adults With Aphasia (SCA™) and supports provider skills and knowledge to improve patient experience in care and health outcomes. We are very excited to pilot our first training curriculum and our very first Certified Aphasia Institute trainer outside of Canada in Finland. Elisa Johansson came to us initially in 2022 to take our training curriculum in English and grew a passion to educate peers in her own country. We have worked with Elisa in the last couple of years to develop a Finnish and Swedish translated curriculum that we hope will resonate with the community. We are excited to see the impact to both healthcare providers and people with aphasia. – Natalie Gierman, Executive Director, Aphasia Institute, Toronto, ON, Canada

For 20 years SCA™ has only been available for few SLPs in Finland each of which have done their own translations to adapt SCA™ knowledge in their services. It is therefore no wonder that practices that comprehensively consider customers and streamline services have not become established in operations. Good practices now have a better chance of success. The pilot is the first step in my personal career journey of bringing communicative access to everyday knowledge here in Finland, which will hopefully be long and impact many. – Elisa Johansson, Certified Aphasia Institute Trainer, Finland

If interested in taking the courses in Finnish and/or Swedish, please go to: [Aikuispuheterapia & koulutuspalvelut - INTONAATTORIT](#)



About Aphasia Institute's Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™)

Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™) is a communication method that uses a set of techniques to encourage conversation when working with someone with aphasia through:

- Spoken and written keywords
- Body language and gestures
- Hand drawings
- Detailed pictographs

SCA™ is designed to help people who “know more than they can say” express their opinions and feelings in a way that makes them feel valued and heard. By using the SCA™ method, conversation partners (such as family members, doctors, nurses, or friends) can help break down the communication barriers and help people with aphasia re-join life's conversations.

The goals of Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™) are:

1. Acknowledge the competence of the adult with aphasia.
2. Help the adult with aphasia to reveal his or her competence.

About Aphasia Institute's Education Approach

The Aphasia Institute's Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™) courses are designed specifically for healthcare professionals seeking to enhance their skills in working with clients with aphasia. Our institute is renowned as a premier teaching and learning center, committed to empowering individuals with aphasia and enabling effective communication.

The Aphasia Institute's exceptional reputation is acknowledged in the International Journal of Aphasiology, as a place founded on values of autonomy, joint enterprise, empowerment, dignity, information evaluation, socialization, and access, all encapsulated in the fundamental concept of “conversational” partnership. With unwavering dedication, we strive daily to uphold this commitment throughout our courses.