

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS

RESOURCE GUIDE



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

“The Possibilities are Endless” is a film that tells the story of **Edwyn Collins**, a musician who had a **stroke** at the **age of 45** and suffers from **aphasia**.

This guide will help support conversations inspired by the film. The guide will be useful for:

- People with aphasia
- Organisations supporting stroke survivors
- Film clubs
- Educators
- Community groups

The resource guide will provide:

- Deepen understanding of aphasia and its impact
- Building peer support to increase confidence and well-being
- Developing other support networks
- Challenging stereotypes
- Raising awareness of aphasia in the wider community
- Give ideas about ways of using the film as a springboard for discussion

IN THIS GUIDE, YOU’LL FIND:

About The Possibilities Are Endless

About aphasia

1. Getting started
2. Discussion questions
3. Get drawing!
4. Take further action
5. Resources
6. Acknowledgements



ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS

Edwyn Collins was a successful Scottish **songwriter** and **musician** who suffered a **stroke** at the age of **45**. Edwyn was lead singer of the band '**Orange Juice**' who released '**Falling and laughing**' in 1980.

Orange juice provided a **foundation stone** for an indie movement with bands such as Primal Scream, Belle And Sebastian and Franz Ferdinand coming later.

In 1983 they released the hit '**Rip it Up**', the epitome of their **Velvets/Chic** punk-funk hybrid, complete with **Buzzcocks-homage** guitar solo.

Edwyn then embarked on a long solo career and had a hit in 1995 with the iconic '**A Girl Like You**'.

His **life** was turned **upside down** with his **stroke**. The only **two phrases** he could utter was '**the possibilities are endless**', and '**Grace Maxwell**', the name of his wife.

The film gets **inside Edwyn's mind** to experience his remarkable **journey** from the brink of **death** back to language, music, **life** and love. With the **help** of his wife **Grace**, Edwyn is **submerged** in a landscape of **memories** as he tries to **unlock** the **story** of his **life**.

More than a **story** of **determination** against all odds; it is an **intimate** and **life-affirming** tale of **rediscovery**.



ABOUT APHASIA

Aphasia is a **communication disability**. It occurs when the **communication centres** of the brain are **damaged**. It is usually **caused** by **stroke**, but can also be caused by **brain haemorrhage**, **head injury** and **brain-tumours**.

It **affects** more than **250,000** people in the UK. This is more than those who live with MS and Parkinson's Disease combined. However, many people have never heard of it.

Aphasia is a **hidden disability**, so few people know about it. Aphasia does **not** affect **intelligence**, but people have **difficulty** getting **messages in and out**.

If you have **aphasia**, you may find it **hard** to:

- talk
- understand others when they speak
- read
- write
- use numbers and do calculations

If you have **aphasia**, you may feel very **bewildered** and **lonely**. It can help to meet **others** who are in the **same situation**. It's a good idea to **talk** to a **speech and language therapist** about your aphasia.

Top tips for talking with people with aphasia:

- say one thing at a time
- don't rush - be patient
- reduce background noise
- ask what helps
- draw diagrams or pictures
- use gesture and mime



- minimise questions
- Give the person plenty of time
- Ask yes or no questions when the person has difficulty getting their message across
- Give a person choices e.g. 'is it x or y?'
- Use maps, newspapers and photos to support conversation
- Google is your friend! If you have access, the internet is excellent for conversation support

What causes aphasia? Aphasia can be caused by a number of things:

- stroke -- injury to the brain
- infections and inflammations of the brain
- progressive aphasia
- tumours in the brain

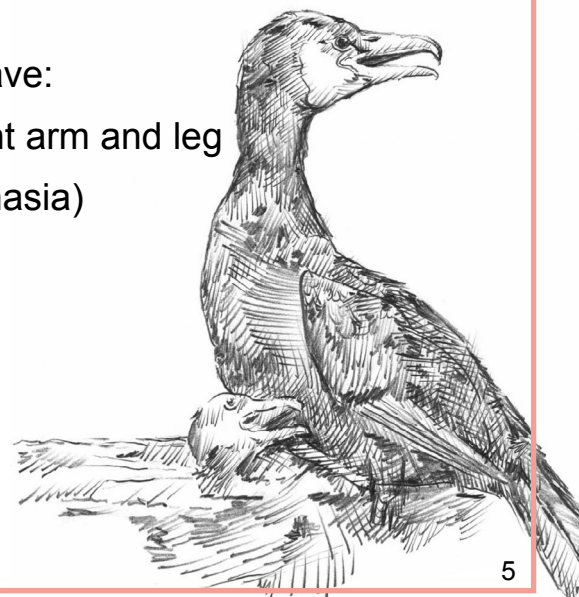
Stroke is one of the most **common causes** of aphasia. A **stroke interrupts** the blood supply to the **brain**. The brain tissue becomes **damaged**. The **language centre** of the brain is in the **left hemisphere**, so most people with aphasia have suffered a **left hemisphere stroke**.

The left side of your brain controls many things including:

- right side of the body
- language and communication

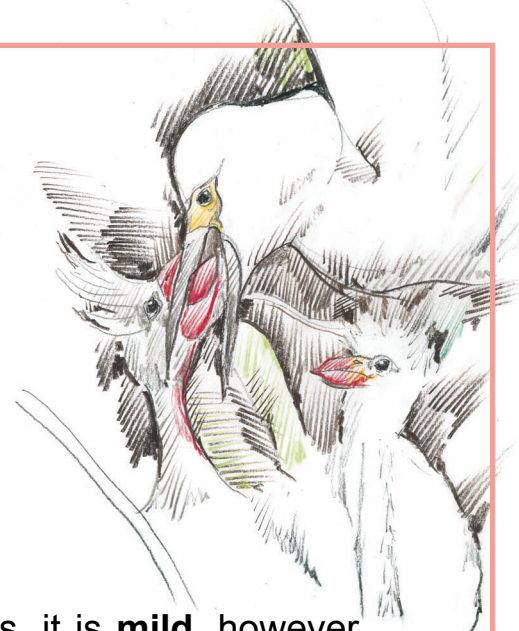
If the left side of your brain is affected, you may have:

- Right side weakness or paralysis, e.g. in right arm and leg
- language and communication problems (aphasia)



Aphasia can take many different forms. It can affect:

- talking
- listening and understanding
- reading
- writing
- using numbers



Some people have very **severe aphasia**. For others, it is **mild**, however the **impact** can still be **profound**. Different people have **different types** of aphasia. Aphasia can also be called **Dysphasia**.

What does aphasia feel like? Living with aphasia brings lots of **new challenges**. **Communication** is so important to **life, work, relationships and leisure**. It can be hard to re-connect to life. Many things help in finding a way forward; stroke service providers, others with aphasia and clear, accessible information.

1. GETTING STARTED

“The Possibilities Are Endless” can be used in a variety of contexts, from a small group dialogue to a large public event. Consider using it:

- In leadership trainings
- To support peer mentorship efforts
- To prompt dialogue in a peer support group
- As the centerpiece of a community event
- To kick-off a youth-led panel discussion



Whatever you do, be sure to plan ahead. Here are the basics you should keep in mind:

- Do you have a room that you can use with the proper equipment (laptop, high-speed internet and speakers with the appropriate adaptors)?
- Think ahead about how much time you'll need for your screening. It could take you anywhere from one hour to three, depending on your discussion, activities, etc. For example:
 1. Setting up the room (table, chairs, A/V): 15-20 min.
 2. Showing the film: 89 minutes
 3. Discussion: 30-60 minutes
 4. Clean-up: 15-20 minutes
- When scheduling with the group, pick a convenient location and time to ensure everyone who wants to participate, can.
- Look through the discussion questions ahead of time so you have an idea of the types of questions you think are most relevant to your group and the length of time you have.

2. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Feel free to pick and choose the questions that are most interesting and relevant to you and your group.

General questions:

- Was there a particular moment or scene that really jumped out at you? Which one, and why?
- Does this story relate to your own life, or to your family and friends?

Please explain.

- What role does music and art play in Edwyn's recovery?
Does music and art play a special role in your life?
- What role does the landscape of Helmsdale play in the film?
- Why do you think the directors decided to film the beginning of the film in such an experimental way?

QUESTIONS ON APHASIA & STROKE

- What is aphasia also known as?
- What are some of the effects of aphasia? Aphasia can lead to: isolation, frustration, problems with relationships, anxiety, anger, lack of confidence, unemployment, boredom, depression, uncertainty, embarrassment, a different way of life.
- What are some of the warning signs of stroke? See here for Andrew Marr's account of what happened to him:

www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/may/04/andrew-marr-warning-signs-stroke

- What kinds of activities are helpful to those with aphasia and/or stroke?

3. CREATE YOUR OWN ART!

"I think my first real recovery began with my first bird drawing." - **Edwyn Collins**, The Guardian

Creating artwork is a great way to be active and physical, it's fun and stimulating and research shows the benefits of creating art are:

- a form of expression and communication
- art can enhance the skill of self observation

- art making is uplifting and confidence building
- stress & anxiety reducing and relaxing

If you are an individual: Get drawing and tweet or email us your artwork!

@EdwynFilm / brid@pulsefilms.co.uk. We will upload your artwork to our Gallery page.

If you are a group/ organisation: Set up your own art drawing class and draw birds! We can help connect you with local artist facilitators or/ and with further partners to help share the cost of the resources needed for the arts workshop. We can also connect you to your nearest RSPB site where there'll be birds aplenty to look at and to find inspiration from!

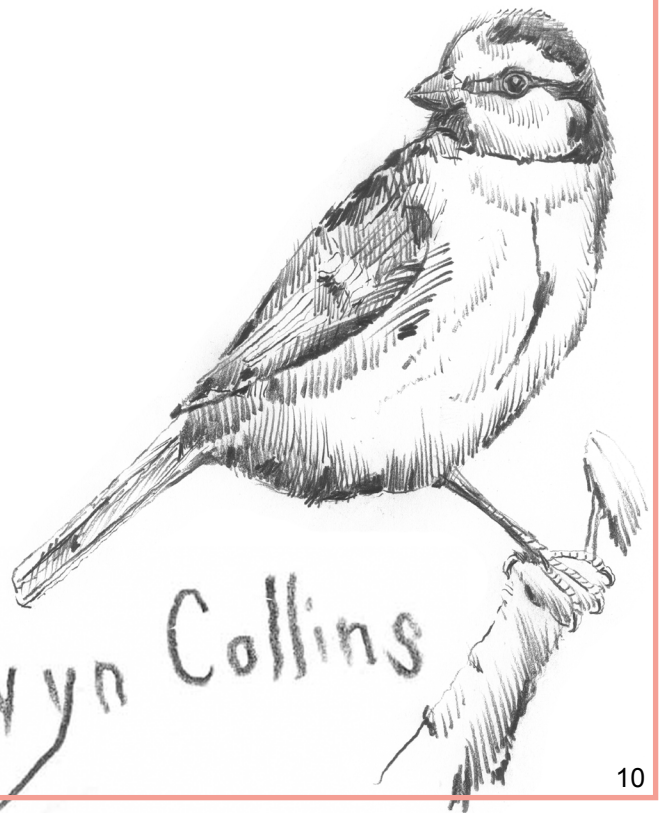
We want audiences to be inspired to create and share their own artwork with us and be part of our campaign to raise awareness of aphasia.

Check out our website and online gallery:

www.thepossibilities.co.uk/campaign/gallery

HOW TO DRAW A BIRD...





Edwyn Collins

CREATING FOUNDATION LINES

Do not start your drawing by putting in details. Your initial strokes create the structure on which you can add detail later. Start lightly and loosely. Block in the posture, proportions and angles. Then you can add eyes beak and feathers.



1 Start with one line indicating the bird's posture or long axis of the body.

5 Add the eye-bill line indicating which way the bird is looking. The eye will sit on top of this line.

6 Draw the tail from the upper part of the body oval. The tail originates from a point inside the body. The clock trick may help you insert the tail at the right place.

2 Make an oval or egg shape that reflects the form of the body around the axis of the posture line.

3 Add a head, paying attention to size and location. It is easy to make the head too big and to place it too far forward.

Visualize a line tangent with the head and body. Is it angled or vertical? This will help you place the head in the right location.

4 Stop and check your proportions. Here I realized my head was too large and made it smaller. Once you add detail, it becomes more difficult to change. It may be helpful to visualize a clock to say to yourself, "this head settles between 10 and 12".

7 Carve in the angles on the contour of the edge of the body. Pay attention to changes in angles where the head and tail connect. It may help to look at the negative space (shape of the air not the bird). Can you identify a bird or your sketch by its silhouette?

8 Carefully note the location of the wrist (front end of the wing) and draw a line along the leading edge of the wing. Is the wing up or drooped?

9 Add a line along the rear edge of the secondary feathers.

10 Note where the legs meet the body (clock trick), as well as the angle and length of each leg (they may be different). Observe the negative space under the legs.

4. TAKE FURTHER ACTION!

You can maintain the momentum of the screening discussion by taking steps to foster a support system for you and your peers that can lead to your collective success. Here are some ideas:

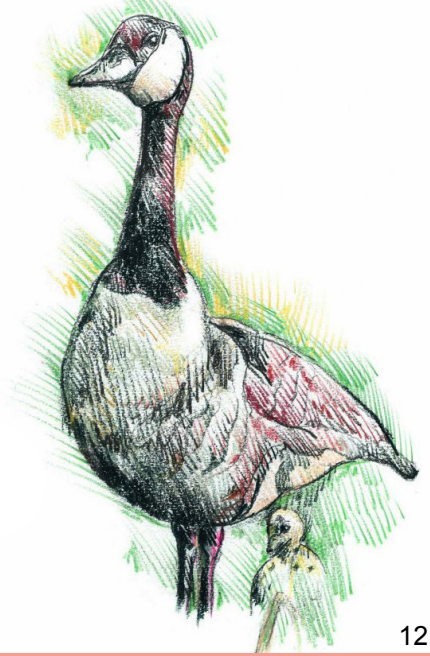
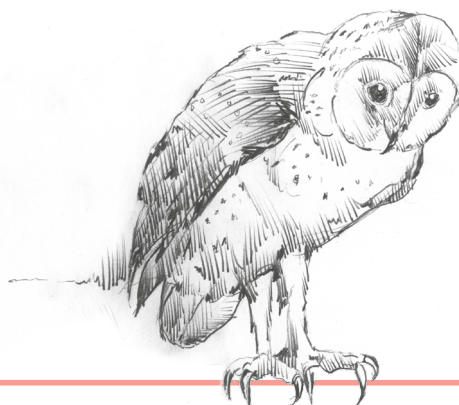
- Start a group, if you haven't already, that meets regularly to share experiences, tips and strategies for productively dealing with tough choices, hardship and stereotypes.
- Join an existing group. Check in with local organisations near you - whether it's a stroke organisation, an art group, a nature group. See the end of this guide for suggestions.
- Donate to Connect UK www.ukconnect.org/resources/donate
- Weigh in! Join The Possibilities are endless community and share your ideas about what steps people can take to support people with aphasia. Post your thoughts and bird drawings to:

Facebook @EdwynFilm

Twitter Tweet to hashtag #thepossibilities #aphasia. Tag @EdwynFilm

Tumblr and/or Instagram if you've got photos or favorite quotes.

Tag @Edwynfilm and #thepossibilities



5. RESOURCES

ART

Drawing birds:

www.johnmurlaws.com/drawing-birds

Drawing for People with Aphasia – contact Cat Andrew

catandrew.ca@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/aphasiadrawing

www.catandrew.com

STROKE

Connect - www.ukconnect.org The Communication and disability charity.

The Stroke Association - www.stroke.org.uk

Different Strokes - www.differentstrokes.co.uk

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists - www.rcslt.org.uk

Speech and language therapist (SLT) - Phone book under the name of your local hospital (ask for the stroke unit)

Nature

RSPB www.rspb.org.uk

National Trust www.nationaltrust.org.uk



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PULSE



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