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DISCOVERING ABILITIES TOGETHER

Assistive Technology for Communication

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Pine Tree Society's AT Services

- **Assessments**
- **Consultations**
- **Direct Services**
- **Individuals we service: physical, cognitive, etc.**
- **Device trial and selection**
  - AT Device Demo
  - AT Device Loan=Pine Tree Society AT Device Inventory
- **Training in the use of the device**

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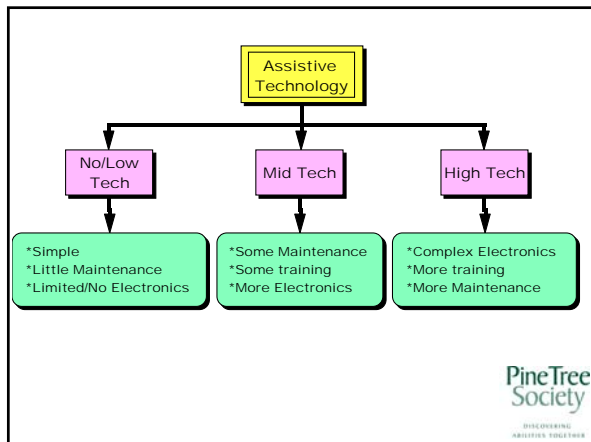
Common Ground Understanding

- **AT (IDEA, ADA, Section 504 of Rehab. Act)**
  - **AAC (dedicated vs non-dedicated)**
- **Private Insurance/MaineCare/Medicare**
  - **(communication/medical necessity)**
- **MaineCare Waiver Sections**
- **MaineCare Sections 109 and 60/DME**

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Assessment of AT

- **Feature Matching/SETT/HEAATS Frameworks**
- **Justification in all areas including fine and gross motor, access, cognition, language**
- **4+ week trial (for communication of a dedicated device) and the Dr. must review eval and be in agreement, and have seen person within the last 6 months (documented) ***Other paperwork required**
- **4+ week trial NOT required for Private Pay, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (in most instances) and those covered by a waiver.**

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Assistive Technology

No/Low Tech | **Mid Tech** | **High Tech**

| *Simple *Little Maintenance *Limited/No Electronics | *Some Maintenance *Some training *More Electronics | *Complex Electronics *More training *More Maintenance |

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Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) Tools

(Dedicated vs. Non-Dedicated)

Low Tech $
-Hierarchy = Objects, Photographs, Pictures
-Communication boards
-Communication books
-Text/Writing

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AAC Communication Tools Continued

Mid Tech $$
Simple voice-output devices
Voice-output devices with levels

High Tech $$$
Eye-gaze or eye-pointing systems
Communication software
Word prediction, abbreviation,
or expansion options to reduce keystrokes

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How to choose AT ?

Goal: functional, effective, efficient communication

- User preference
- User-friendly, user/family/caregiver abilities and support
- Attention to the device
- Communicative intent
- Language skills: Breadth & depth of vocabulary
- Language syntax---can they put words together
- Navigational skills
- Representational understanding
- Literacy skills

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More on AT Selection

- **Object permanence---** knowing that within the device, words are in underlying layers
- **Access method---** lots to help but if fatigue fast then low-tech may be better
- **Behavior**
- **"Verbalish"---** those who just need a clarification tools, but don't want a different voice.
- **Environments that AT will be used in**
- **Tasks that the person will be engaged in**

***it doesn't have to be just one, may be a mix of the above

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Funding

- Health Insurances are learning that tablet devices can be an AAC device @ far less cost
- Limited insurance funding at this time for an open/non-dedicated device such as an iPad as an AAC tool
- Insurances are not funding "recreational" tool or extra warranties, or most ancillary items (i.e. carrying cases)
- State/Insurers are specific when it comes to funding paperwork requirements

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More on Funding

So what is available?
- Schools --- CDS and Special Ed
- Private pay
- The Robbie Foundation
- mPower Financing/Loan Program through Alpha One
- Putting The Pieces Together (Autism Specific)
- New waivers that include AT
- Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
- Dedicated Apple device (communication)
- Others?

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Smart Technology

- **Android Phones**
  - **S-Voice – Samsung Devices**
  - **"OK Google" - Android**
  - **Dragon Mobile**
  - **Swype Keyboard**
  - **Talkback**
  - **Visual adjustments**
  - **Text to Speech Options (can download higher quality voices)**

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Smart Technology Continued

- **Apple iPhones**
  - **Siri**
  - **VoiceOver**
  - **Hearing Aide Features**
  - **Guided Access**
  - **Restrictions**
  - **Switch Use**
  - **Speak Selection/Speak Screen**
  - **Volume Supports**
  - **Dragon Dictation**

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Common AAC Apps

- **Go Talk Now**
- **Sounding Board**
- **Speak it**
- **TouchChat** (with and without WordPower)
- **Lamp Words for Life**
- **Verbally**
- **Sono Flex**
- **Compass/PODD**
- **PECS IV+**

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Thank you!!

Questions?

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