

Maine CITE Program Training Webinar

Augmentative and Alternative
Communication (AAC) and Aging


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Age-Related Communication Changes


- Hearing (/Balance) & Vision Acuity
- Voice Quality
- Speech: Precision, Volume
- Language/Memory
 - Word finding
 - Comprehension of Complex Sentences



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Aging & Impairment


<p>“Disability with Aging”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impairment comes later in life • Acquired • Degenerative 	<p>“Aging with Disability”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with childhood impairments aging • Congenital • Developmental • Intellectual
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Age-Related Risks


- Stroke, Traumatic Brain Injury
 - Aphasia, Dysarthria, Cognition
- Acquired
 - Immediate Loss of Communication Skills
- Degenerative
 - Gradual Loss of Communication Skills
 - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis,
 - Parkinson's Disease
 - Myasthenia Gravis
 - Primary Progressive Aphasia
- *Dementia*


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AAC: What is It?

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to tools and strategies used to:

- **Compensate** for temporary or permanent communication impairments
- **Supplement** and/or replace "traditional" forms of communication (speech)


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No-Low-High Technology

<p>No Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocalizations/Voice • Facial Expressions • Pointing & Gestures • Partner Assisted Scanning 	<p>Low-High Tech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pen & Paper • Photographs, Objects • High technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Communication apps ◦ Dedicated AAC systems
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High Technology Options

Commercially Available & Dedicated AAC Products

Alternative Access Methods



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Commercial, AAC Apps


- Proloquo2Go
- Predictable
- Verbally
- Touchchat
- GoTalk Now
- Dynavox Compass Software



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Dedicated AAC


- TobiiDynavox
- Prentke Romich
- Lingraphica
- Saltillo
- Mayer-Johnson
 - Boardmaker



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Alternative Access


- Switch
- Eye Gaze
- Brain Computer Interface
- Gesture recognition
- Voice Activation
- Mount systems
- Portability



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When to Consider an AAC Eval


- If there is a change in skill or communication discrepancy (relative to peer communication), then make/request referral for licensed speech-language pathologist.
 - Preferable a specialist or has experience with AAC
- Individual Skill, Interest + AAC Feature matching



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The SLP AAC Evaluation

- Communication History
- Cognition, Language Expression and Comprehension
- Inventory Existing/Intact Abilities/Skills
- Combinations of standardized tests,
- Multiple device/system trials



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Social Networks



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TASP Example



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Feature Matching Process

- Using individual's skills, preferences, and needs to guide clinical decision making
 - To recommend useful technology; identifying a "match" from available feature combinations
- What device options or strategies are available that might help the person become a better communicator?
 - In a variety of contexts? How are this person's needs likely to change over time?

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Feature Match *Grid*

- Example Not all inclusive.



AAC Considerations

- AAC "facilitator" key to success
- Consider individual's changing needs
 - Sensory deficits increase, adjust stimuli
 - Shrinking (rapidly/gradually) social networks
- Service Extends Beyond Device Acquisition
 - Partner Support/Training




Current issues in AAC

- Dedicated vs. Mobile Tech
- Funding
- Literacy
- Vocabulary
- Word Prediction
- Employment
- Independent Living
- Professional Development



While You Wait
 . . .
 Communication Friendly Environments
 &
 Temporary DIY AAC Solutions



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Communication Friendly Environments:

- Quiet, well lit, promotes face-to-face interaction
 - Community reminders of calendar events, visitors, upcoming routines
- Provide access to sensory aids as needed
 - glasses, hearing aids
- TIME!
- Provide partners with counseling/support and training



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Aging Communication Supports

- Know individual strengths + limits
- Simplify sentences, speak *slower*
- Limit information given in session
- Verbal descriptions + pictures and writing
- Confirm understanding



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DYI AAC Solutions

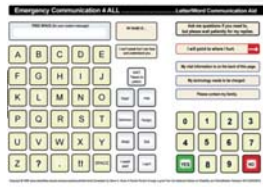
- Natural supports within the environments can be support and maintain communicative independence

- Printed communication cards & reminders
- Pen & Paper/Notepad, White Board, Marker
- Letter Boards



“Letter Boards”

A	B	C	D		
E	F	G	H		
I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z




DYI: Visual Schedules

- Does not have to be tech oriented
- Low tech is more universal
 - Location can benefit everyone



DIY: Memory “Wallets”

- Photo album with names of important:
 - People, Places, Events
- Smaller, actual wallet, portable
 - key information only
- Folder/Binder with Remnants
 - Ticket stubs
 - Event/Activity Receipts
 - Playbills
 - Photographs
 - Restaurant Menus




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DIY: “Signal Inventory”

- Many individuals have residual skills or develop their own adaptive communication techniques.
- These are building blocks.
- Make a list,

“ When _____ does _____, it means _____.”



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DIY: Family Communication

- Communication Partner Relay System
 - Caring Bridges
- Online (blog, group)
- Day-to-day + Visitor Journal
 - Family + Professionals





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Thank you!

- Questions?
- Thank you, please fill out survey at the end of this webinar*
- Contact info: jennifer.seale@maine.edu



Resources

- aac-lerc.psu.edu
- <http://cehs.unl.edu/aac/>
- www.ussaac.org
- www.asha.org/njc
- ASHA Special Interest Group 12
 - ListServ
- <https://www.caringbridge.org>
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/social-networks-package>
- <http://www.mayer-johnson.com/tasp>