CM2021

Communication Matters International AAC Conference (Virtual)

13-17 September 2021

Communication Matters

Contents

Platform Abstracts

"It's nice to see a smile" - Designing and Testing a Transparent Mask to Support Communication

Griffiths, Tom - Author; Bush, Abi - Co-Author; Ayling, Emma - Co-Author

Submission ID

27

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The COVID-19 Pandemic presented many challenges. For those with communication difficulties and people working in the field, the universal adoption of face masks meant that key visual cues for lipreading and understanding facial expression were lost (Grote & Izagaren, 2020). The Clinical Engineering Innovation Team at Addenbrooke's Hospital were approached by a Nurse who relies on lipreading with a request to make a transparent mask that would help with this problem, whilst still providing the same level of protection needed for a clinical environment. After a year of work, the Panoramic Mio-Mask is now on the market, registered with the MHRA and carries the CE mark which means it can be used in hospitals, schools and care homes across the country. This presentation will talk through the design and development of the mask, talking delegates through from initial focus groups and research, prototyping sessions, design decisions and the challenges of making sure the mask met all the requirements for safety and performance. The team will discuss the challenges we faced and what we learned from developing the mask, as well as talking through some results of our clinical evaluation, which provided us with real insight into how the mask performed for clinicians in the hospital. We hope to give delegates some insight into how we addressed various design challenges from fit and filtration through to fogging and fastenings. We will be sure to leave time for questions as we'd love to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

References (Optional)

Grote H, Izagaren F. Covid-19: The communication needs of D/deaf healthcare workers and patients are being forgotten BMJ 2020; 369 :m2372 doi:10.1136/bmj.m2372

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

« and yet , she talks » My daughter's communication path, with us.

Lachenal, Marielle - Author

Submission ID

43

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

I am the mother of a young lady, who is said to be "non-verbal". People ask "Does she speak ?" or even " Does she think? »I would like to stand up for her ! No, she does not speak, but she can talk. She is « verbal », and she is just like any of us : she uses gestures, signs, objects, pictures, books, symbols, apps, computers… and she talks, she shares the depths of her mind with us. People ask another question : « How did you know that she needed signs, symbols, objects.. » ? I would like to answer : I did not know ! It has been a shared journey. . She does not talk in the desert. She talks with us, and we find together the way. It is not a top-down process, it is a matter of reciprocity. I could rely on Tronto's work on Care. People say » she has complex communication needs , does not she ? » I would like to reply that she has the same communication needs as I have, she has to deal with the same issues as any human beings; she just needs to have people willing to talk with her, and being able to meet her wonderful person. And I would like to thank Isaac francophone for all the road that I have traveled thanks to the people I have met, and who have helped me to always believe in my daughter's communication.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

1-Voice digital update

Hynan, Amanda - Author; Hewson, Helen - Co-Author

Submission ID

40

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

This presentation at the 2021 Communication Matters virtual conference will share the story of how coronavirus affected the 1-Voice Communicating Together charity. We had started 2020 in great anticipation of celebrating our 20th anniversary at our annual national residential weekend in August. As the full impact of the global pandemic evolved, it became clear that sadly this dream was not to be. However, we were determined, like so many other organisations, to rise to the challenge and move our plans online. When Communication Matters announced they would be moving their conference online in October 2020 to mark AAC awareness month, we decided this would be the perfect time for us to also hold our first online event and celebrate our 20th anniversary. The last year has brought our small and dynamic community together in new and creative ways that we would not necessarily have imagined at the start of the year. Our presentation will share information about how we have planned, organised and run several online events, developed new social media groups for members who use AAC and families, started a new role model training programme online, and launched our new website.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

AAC as a Restorative Tool for Persons with Aphasia

Diener, Bethany - Author

Submission ID

55

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Persons with aphasia (PWA) want to regain the ability to communicate as they always have through speech. Current research demonstrates that AAC can be viewed as a vital tool that can simultaneously support language function and compensation during breakdowns (Dietz et al, 2020). Yet, AAC has often been rejected by PWA or their families because it is seen as only an alternative to speech. Clinicians may reinforce this view by introducing AAC only at the very end of therapeutic intervention or by using AAC to practice skills that do not pertain to the client's participation goals (e.g., naming common objects versus telling a story to grandchildren). This session will review this informative research about the dual-purpose of AAC and explore how to practically utilize AAC in both face-to-face and remote therapy with the aim of accomplishing client participation goals. Tobii Dynavox's Snap Aphasia and Snap Scene will be utilized to illustrate ideas which can be implemented with many similar grid-based or visual scene-based applications.

References (Optional)

Dietz, A., Wallace, S., & Weissling, K. (May 2020). Revisiting the Role of Augmentative and Alternative Communication in Aphasia Rehabilitation. American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 29(2), 909–913.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

Adult

Details of sponsorship

Tobii Dynavox

AAC Exams Access Board - Published Guidelines for AAC Exam Access

Murphy-Mann, Saffron - Author; Kilvington-Smith, Laura - Co-Author; Stanton, Marion - Co-Author; Baggley, Laura - Co-Author

Submission ID

12

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The AAC Exams Access Working Group have been collaborating with exams officers, parents/carers, AAC users, specialist teachers, educational settings and Ofqual, over a long period of time in order to understand the experiences AAC users have had in achieving external qualifications. The group have also understood the barriers AAC Users and the professionals supporting them, have faced in applying for, and agreeing exam access arrangements as per the reasonable adjustments they are able to request. The group have produced a national guidance document to guide those roles in supporting the application of exam access arrangements for key stage 1 level to A-level. The group's aim is to give all professionals, AAC Users, parents/carers a path towards applying for exam access arrangements in order to achieve access to external qualifications. The group will introduce the document, discuss the process in getting to this point, and offer additional examples of successful examination access arrangements applications that could not be used within the document.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

Adult

An inclusive research philosophy taking a Participatory Action Research approach: how this underpinned delivery of the I-ASC research project

Murray, Janice - Author

Submission ID

89

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

This presentation summarises the approach to including people with lived experience of communication disability as part of a research team. Children, young people and their family members are important contributors to any decision and recommendation process. Including their voices and perspectives is important but not always commonplace. We will describe how we did this and what these participants told us. Public involvement and community engagement in the development, delivery and dissemination of research findings is regarded as good practice. Notably, including people with severe speech and motor impairment in these research processes is not easy and so their 'voices' are rarely heard. We will describe the I-ASC co-creation approach to research development, delivery and dissemination.

References (Optional)

https://iasc.mmu.ac.uk/

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Details of sponsorship

Manchester Metropolitan University

An open AAC and AT Ecosystem Services Framework for Community Practice.

Draffan, E.A. - Author; Banes, David - Co-Author

Submission ID

39

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and Assistive Technology (AT) services are essentially participatory, thriving when interconnected relationships are developed to support users [1]. An open ecosystem services framework can bring together all the different activities that need to be completed to effectively implement successful use of AAC and AT [2]. The principles are similar to the GATE GREAT Summit's 5 'P's - 'People, Products, Provisioning, Personnel and Policy' [3], although the proposed framework is orientated towards implementation and the design of services in any setting, rather than the design of products. It includes topics such as:

- Policy or coordination
- Awareness
- Advice and Information
- Assessment and Evaluation of needs
- Provision of products
- Training
- Support
- Research

Success depends on the interconnectivity of components and when put into practice, processes are not linear but dynamic and affected by both external and internal factors. As an ecosystem it is made up of interdependent parts, where a weakness in one threatens the whole. Where something fails, delivery may continue, but increasingly it becomes less likely that planned outcomes will be achieved. For example, an AAC system may be provided and used, but without access to localisation skills, personalisation or technical and training support, the range of activities may falter, affecting success rates. This presentation aims to illustrate how this AAC and AT ecosystem services framework has been used in three countries, supported by a UNICEF project hub. There will be a discussion about strategies including free and open licensed online resources and evaluation methods such as PIADS [4] used over a year, interrupted by COVID-19.

References (Optional)

1. Mandak, K., O'Neill, T., Light, J. and Fosco, G.M., (2017) Bridging the gap from values to actions: A family systems framework for family-centered AAC services. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 33(1), pp.32-41.
2. Banes D. (2011) Nurturing Qatar's AT ecosystem for the global community. Assistive Technology Industry Association Newsletter, November 2011 "The Global Edition"

Accessed April 2021 https://studylib.net/doc/8530408/word---assistive-technology-industry-association
3. Smith, R.O., Scherer, M.J., Cooper, R., Bell, D., Hobbs, D.A., Pettersson, C., Seymour, N., Borg, J., Johnson, M.J., Lane, J.P. and Sujatha, S., (2018) Assistive technology products: a position paper from the first global research, innovation, and education on assistive technology (GREAT) summit. Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology, 13(5), pp.473-485. Accessed April 2021 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17483107.2018.1473895
4. Jutai, J., & Day, H. (2002). Psychosocial impact of assistive devices scale (PIADS). Technology and Disability, 14(3), 107-111.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Angelman syndrome and lots to say.

Campbell, Tracey - Author

Submission ID

71

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Was an almost overnight change in communication ability at the start of 2021 a happy coincidence of the pandemic or an inevitable outcome after many years of aided language simulation? After several years as a context dependent communicator what changes have occurred to help a 15-year-old with Angelman syndrome make the move towards communication independence. This presentation explores the whole communication journey with particular emphasis over the past year. We begin with a whistle-stop tour through a first introduction to speech and language after diagnosis at 2.5 years, a PODD book at 7 and the beginning of modelling at 8 years. Next a more in-depth discussion of coronavirus lockdown, a new AAC platform, video messaging, Alexa, sensory processing and underlying needs will help assess the changes in communication ability. Lastly, next steps towards independent communication including teaching literacy will be explored. One thing is for sure, this girl has lots to say!

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Becoming an aided communicator (BAC) – Basic ideas and aims

von Tetzchner, Stephen - Author

Submission ID

108

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Some children have little or no speech and communicate using communication aids, but many aspects of aided language development are still not well known. This means that some of the basis for teaching or scaffolding children who develop aided communication is lacking. “Becoming an Aided Communicator (BAC): Aided Language Skills in Children aged 5–15 years: A Multi-site and Cross-cultural Investigation” includes researchers from 16 countries. The main aim of the project was to investigate how young aided communicators and a comparison group of children with typical language development managed communicative “problems” typical of everyday language use. To investigate the potential of aided language use, the project included only participants who were not considered intellectually impaired by their teachers or therapists. Most have cerebral palsy. There are few studies aided language development and use and hence also few standard tasks for investigating aided language. Some of the tasks are similar to items in tests of vocabulary and grammar of spoken language. A core feature of language and addressed in several project tasks is the ability to inform other persons about people, events and ideas that are unknown to them and beyond the here and now. The participants had to describe visual content of drawings and video events, to adult or peer partners who did not know the content. There were also conversations about given topics. Finally, the children were interviewed about everyday communication issues. The parents and teachers were interviewed about the aided language development and education, and completed various checklist and evaluation scales.

References (Optional)

von Tetzchner, S. (2018). Introduction to the special issue on aided language processes, development, and use: an international perspective. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34, 1-15.
Batorowicz, B., Stadskleiv, K., Renner, G., Dahlgren Sandberg, A., & von Tetzchner, S. (2018). Language and communication assessment: Achievements of children who use aided communication. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34, 34-67.
Deliberato, D., Jennische, M., Oxley, J., Nunes, L. R. D. O. D. P., Walter, C. C. D. F., Massaro, M., ... & von Tetzchner, S. (2018). Vocabulary comprehension and strategies in name construction among children using aided communication. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34, 16-29.
Murray, J., Sandberg, A. D., Smith, M. M., Deliberato, D., Stadskleiv, K., & von Tetzchner, S. (2018). Communicating the unknown: descriptions of pictured scenes and events presented

on video by children and adolescents using aided communication and their peers using natural speech. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34, 30-39.
Stadskleiv, K., Batorowicz, B., Massaro, M., van Balkom, H., & von Tetzchner, S. (2018). Visual-spatial cognition in children using aided communication. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34, 68-78.
Smith, M. M., Batorowicz, B., Sandberg, A. D., Murray, J., Stadskleiv, K., van Balkom, H., ... & von Tetzchner, S. (2018). Constructing narratives to describe video events using aided communication. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34, 40-53.
von Tetzchner, S., Launonen, K., Batorowicz, B. Nunes, L. R. d'O. de P., Walter, C. C. de F., Oxley, J., Massaro, M., Stadskleiv, K., Yang, C.-H. & Deliberato, D. (2018). Communication aid provision and use among children and adolescents developing aided communication: An international survey. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34, 79–91.
Neuvonen, K. A., Jagoe, C., Launonen, K., Smith, M. M. & von Tetzchner, S. (2019).
Neuvonen, K. A., Jagoe, C., Launonen, K., Smith, M. M., & von Tetzchner, S. (2019). Expectations and interpretations of conversations using aided communication: An application of relevance theory. Journal of Interactional Research in Communication Disorders, 10, 125-152.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Brain Computer Interfaces in AAC: where are we at?

Lourenço, Hélio - Author

Submission ID

72

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs) have been increasingly explored in the last few decades, with the aim of empowering human beings in many different aspects. The advancements of engineering and technology have been allowing these systems to become more accessible, portable, and accurate in decoding physiological data from the brain (Prashant et al., 2015). The use of BCIs in AAC has been following the trend, although this has mostly been used within the research community where adult patients living with severe speech and physical impairments (SSPI), whose physical ability to interact with an electronic interface is typically limited, have been the main targeted group (Akcakaya et al., 2014; Pitt et al., 2019). In this population, a range of concomitant conditions affecting the musculoskeletal and oculomotor systems, as well as vision or even cognitive performance can narrow the spectrum of systems that they can voluntarily and independently control (Fried-Oken et al., 2020). Beyond that, the assessment of factors such as the user's environment, communication needs and levels of support are essential to determine a solution that can succeed. The training time, both for the user and carers and, on the other hand, for the BCI system, can also determine the complexity of its implementation (Pitt et al., 2019). This publication focuses on the current clinical, technical and technological challenges faced by both the professionals and users/carers when using BCIs for AAC, namely, non-invasive systems, with an approach that encompasses the expectations from these systems and their current applicability.

References (Optional)

Prashant, P., Joshi, A., and Gandhi, V. (2015). Brain computer interface: A review. In 2015 5th Nirma University International Conference on Engineering (NUiCONE) (pp. 1-6)
Akcakaya, M., Peters, B., Moghadamfalahi, M., Mooney, A. R., Orhan, U., Oken, B., Erdogmus, D., and Fried-Oken, M. (2014). Noninvasive brain-computer interfaces for augmentative and alternative communication. IEEE reviews in biomedical engineering, 7, 31–49. https://doi.org/10.1109/RBME.2013.2295097
Pitt, K., Brumberg, J., and Pitt, A. (2019). Considering Augmentative and Alternative Communication Research for Brain-Computer Interface Practice. Special Education and Communication Disorders Faculty Publications, 13, 1-20
Fried-Oken, M., Kinsella, M., Peters, B., Eddy, B., & Wojciechowski, B. (2020). Human visual skills for brain-computer interface use: a tutorial. Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology, 15(7), 799-809

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

Can the pattern of disabilities in patients with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) guide us as to who will be most able to use Augmentative and Alternative Communication?

Foy, Catherine - Author

Submission ID

54

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

It is estimated that there are 100,000 people with MS in the UK with about two thirds of people experiencing speech and voice impairments. Symptoms can be variable; some people experience a mild reduction in volume when tired or a slight slurring of speech. In more severe cases speech can be totally unintelligible. MS also causes other disabilities depending on the type of MS a person has and which parts of the brain it affects. As an NHS-EI specialist AAC hub we see a subset of patients with MS who have severe and complex communication difficulties associated with a range of physical, cognitive and sensory deficits. We reviewed our caseload of patients with MS, seen by the service since 2015, to determine the degree of communication, physical and cognitive disabilities experienced and the success of high tech communication aid implementation. These findings have allowed us to determine which patterns of disabilities may predict a successful implementation of a high tech communication aid, which patients might need more ongoing support and which patients might benefit most from low tech communication strategies. Training based on these results has been shared with local therapists.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Children's rights incorporated in law: "Can Scotland be Brave?"

Mackay, Margo - Author

Submission ID

60

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

In 2018, the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer in Scotland funded a project to consider the implications of incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ('UNCRC') into law. The report, "Can Scotland be Brave: implementation of Article 12" was published in December 2020. The project explored how well practitioners, across three different services, understood and implemented the full obligations of Article 12. Practitioners in education, health and a third sector organisation rated themselves using the Laura Lundy model of participation. They were then trained in a communication technique called Talking Mats©. Talking Mats is a way of having a visual conversation which provides support for thinking and self-expression. Practitioners were asked to create a space to have a Talking Mat conversation and to document the outcome. Case examples were then collated and analysed. Practitioners reflected on their own practice and compared the quality of the conversations that were held with and without Talking Mats. 56 practitioners received training and 90 case examples were submitted. Evaluation showed (i) effective two-way communication is at the heart of holistic care; (ii) enabling children and young people to talk about their needs and concerns is the first step in providing services that effectively address these concerns and (iii) genuine CYP participation supports learning and enhances wellbeing. Being brave enough to open up conversations also requires a commitment to actually make changes; and making false promises is worse than not asking for the child's views at all.

References (Optional)

https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/
https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-brave-incorporating-uncrc-article-12-practice/
https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

Level
General Session

Age Group
All Ages

Details of sponsorship
Talking Mats

Comparing formal and informal assessment of language and cognition in children with Rett syndrome

Townend, Gillian - Author; Ward, Callie - Co-Author

Submission ID

81

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Formal assessments of language and cognition typically rely on verbal or motoric responses. These can be challenging for individuals with motor or speech impairments and can lead to an underestimate of cognitive ability. Historically, people with Rett syndrome have been regarded as severely cognitively impaired. Thanks to developments in eye gaze technology that perception is now changing. Assessments of language and cognition adapted for use with eye gaze are beginning to show that individuals with Rett syndrome may demonstrate a range of abilities akin to the neurotypical population. One notable study (Clarkson et. al. 2017) showed this to be the case through their adaptation of the Mullen Scales of Early Learning (MSEL). By enabling tasks for eye gaze access, the study demonstrated that some children with Rett syndrome were below average compared with their neurotypical peers, however, others were on a par with their peers and others at an above-average level for their age. But, do formal assessments place unreasonable demands on individuals with disordered movement and motor planning, and high levels of anxiety? Can informal assessment styles yield better (or different) information on underlying abilities? This presentation will share a small-scale study recently undertaken to investigate and compare the performance of children with Rett syndrome on formal and newly-designed informal assessments of language and cognition using eye gaze/tracking technology. In this study, 10 children aged 4:0-6:8, displaying varying phenotypes of Rett syndrome, were assessed on the adapted MSEL and on informal assessments of the same skills embedded in activities such as reading and cake-decorating. The assessment methods and results will be presented, and the significance of the findings discussed, with special consideration for the need to adapt assessments so that an individual can be supported in the most appropriate and effective way to maximise their learning and communication.

References (Optional)

1. Clarkson T, LeBlanc J, DeGregorio G, Vogel-Farley V, Barnes K, Kaufmann WE, et al. (2017). Adapting the Mullen Scales of Early Learning for a standardized measure of development in children with Rett syndrome. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 55, 419-31. doi: 10.1352/1934-9556-55.6.419
2. Townend GS, Bartolotta TE, Urbanowicz A, Wandin H, Curfs LMG. (2020b). Rett syndrome communication guidelines: a handbook for therapists, educators and families. Rett Expertise Centre Netherlands-GKC, Maastricht, NL, and Rettsyndrome.org, Cincinatti, OH.
3. Ward C, Chiat S, Townend GS. (2021). A comparison of formal and informal methods for

assessing language and cognition in children with Rett syndrome. Research in Developmental Disabilities. 114, 103961. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2021.103961

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

Child

Developing the EyeTalk: A free printable communication aid

Fairburn, Nicola - Author

Submission ID

14

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The EyeTalk is a free downloadable paper-based communication aid created by the Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology (KM CAT) Adult team. This talk will cover the origin of the idea, the specification, the development of the aid and how it has been used by people assessed by KM CAT. There are many options for people who have significant movement impairments to spell out words using AAC. This includes Frenchay E-Tran, Megabee and Eyelink, which all use eye-pointing. Alternatively, alphabet charts can be used with Partner Assisted Scanning and a person can use a reliable movement to make a choice and spell words. In our experience, some of these options can be difficult for people with cognitive impairments, for example, if the communication aid uses a two-step process to spell each letter of the word. They also often rely on colour to code the letter, they might not be suitable for people with visual difficulties or colour-blindness. The EyeTalk was developed with these challenges in mind. The EyeTalk uses an alphabet with eye-pointing to allow the user to spell their words. In this presentation we will also share the success story of Tony, a man with Multiple Sclerosis who has been using the EyeTalk over a year. He is communicating increasingly complex sentences; using it to request, answer questions, express his emotions, comment and tell stories. The EyeTalk will continue to be considered as an AAC option for people on the KM CAT caseload. We hope that by sharing it for free other people will be able to also access and trial it.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Do the core vocabulary lists used to develop symbolised AAC vocabularies reflect the words used by voice-output communication aid users?

Robinson, Helen - Author

Submission ID

16

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Symbolised AAC vocabularies typically base themselves on 12 ‘core word’ lists. Recent research has shown that the core vocabulary lists used to develop many AAC vocabularies are based on the language of older, verbal children. (Laubscher and Light 2020). This has led me to question whether symbol vocabularies based on core vocabulary lists are what people who use AAC actually want and need. Should we instead be creating symbolised AAC vocabularies based on language samples of people who use AAC? In January 2021 I began an Internship programme funded by Health Education England and the National Institute for Health Research, alongside my clinical role within an NHS England Specialised AAC Service. My literature review will answer the question: Do the core vocabulary lists used to develop symbolised AAC vocabularies reflect the words used by voice-output communication aid users? My presentation will share my findings so far and discuss the core vocabulary lists used to develop AAC vocabularies.

References (Optional)

Emily Laubscher & Janice Light (2020) Core vocabulary lists for young children and considerations for early language development: a narrative review, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 36:1, 43-53, DOI: 10.1080/07434618.2020.1737964

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Early Emergent Shared Reading: Let's Get Started

Farrall, Jane - Author

Submission ID

104

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Emergent literacy activities have a strong impact on each individual's knowledge of the world, the language they are learning and how people communicate within those activities. (Vander Woude et al, 2008). This presentation will discuss getting started with early emergent literacy learners on one of the key emergent literacy activities - shared reading. There are several important ingredients in shared reading - these include using engaging texts, making sure it occurs frequently and interacting with each individual at the appropriate level for their language skills. This presentation will discuss the language level we should use with early emergent literacy learners and demonstrate how this becomes a springboard for including and using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in each shared reading. Important adult skills in implementing emergent literacy will also be described and a text will be used to demonstrate implementing these shared reading interactions using AAC. Come and learn about curating text, building engagement and fostering communication skills - with the added bonus of starting early literacy skills.

References (Optional)

Vander Woude, J & Van Kleeck, A & Veen, V. (2008). Book sharing and the development of meaning in Rhyner, P. Emergent literacy and language development: Promoting learning in early childhood, pp.36 – 77. New York, NY: Guilford Press

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Early Language Intervention in Augmentative and Alternative Communication for Learners with Severe Autism

Wendt, Oliver - Author; Weber, Barbara - Co-Author

Submission ID

85

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This presentation will highlight strategies to enhance early language acquisition when providing augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) intervention for beginning communicators with autism spectrum disorder. The presenters will show a comprehensive intervention approach from targeting joint attention and social sharing skills to enhancing first communicative functions and early semantic relations. Ideally, such AAC supports should be provided as early as possible during the child's developmental trajectory. Early intervention efforts in general have the potential to reduce severity levels of language and intellectual impairment, and are often associated with improved long-term intervention outcomes (Vismara & Rogers, 2010). The first part of this session will give an overview of important early communication milestones from infancy through preschool years that lay the foundation for later-developing skills. Resources for providing developmentally appropriate, functional, practical, and evidence-based services that meet the needs of children and families will be discussed. Formal assessment materials will be presented to address assessment measures for language and development in beginning communicators. How to support skill development with AAC embedded into family routines will be outlined beginning with illustrating how to define and identify daily routines. Determining how to begin infusing AAC into identified routines by coaching caregivers will be discussed. The second part will demonstrate how to extend early AAC language intervention when beginning communicators are moving past initial communication training. Interventions often concentrate mostly on functional communication, but once the individual has acquired single-symbol utterances and is expressing basic communicative functions, it is crucial to transition from single- to multiple-symbol utterances and to expand communicative functions beyond requesting. Moving from single- to multiple-symbol utterances and generalizing those productions is a critical step towards the emergence of syntax and generative language. This presentation will demonstrate how these goals can be accomplished by engaging in matrix training using mobile AAC technologies.

References (Optional)

Vismara, L. A., & Rogers, S. J. (2010). Behavioral treatments in autism spectrum disorder: what do we know? Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 6, 447-468.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Easy-Peasy Print, Post and Go: Levelled Thematic Activities to Support school aged Language and Literacy Learning

Langley, Alice - Author; Donnelly, Maureen - Co-Author

Submission ID

79

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The quality of activities and instruction we provide for students who use AAC impacts their language/ literacy growth and engagement. This session will explore how we can make the following four evidence-based shifts in both the "what" and "how" of language/ literacy instruction: Building background knowledge, providing repetition with variety, differentiating instruction and building safe literacy relationships. The presenters will introduce free activities and curriculum to support the language and literacy needs of students who use AAC. They will also demonstrate how to deliver these activities accessibly across a variety of platforms as well as provide tips and tricks for editing the existing curriculum to suit a range of learners.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Child

Details of sponsorship

Tobii Dynavox

EasyTalk: An assistive text-writing system for Leichte Sprache (Easy-to-read German)

Steinmetz, Ina - Author; Harbusch, Karin - Co-Author

Submission ID

45

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Leichte Sprache (LS; Easy-to-Read German) is a simplified variety of German characterized by simplified syntactic constructions and a small vocabulary (cf. Easy-to-read English). It provides barrier-free information for a wide spectrum of LS readers including individuals with learning difficulties, intellectual disabilities and/or a low level of literacy in the German language. By and large, text in LS is produced by authors proficient in standard German. LS readers have a share in auditing the ease of understandability. We would like to change this division of roles to establish a community where LS readers exchange content themselves. Basically, our assistive writing system EasyTalk supports fast and correct sentence formulation based on profound computational-linguistic processing. To produce written text beyond the scope of face-to-face/short message communication, we elicit the production of text-understandability clues. Words (from a personal vocabulary) are underpinned with (customizable) picture symbols. Commands and contents can be read aloud. Importantly, all dialogues are intuitive and easy-to-use in order not to overtax the users, e.g., by borrowing concepts of writer's workshops for elementary school children like wh-questions to identify grammatical functions. EasyTalk supports users at their personal proficiency level by:
(1) a Natural-Language Paraphrase-Generator that supports fast and correct LS text production while taking readership-design aspects into account (reminding to add place/time of an event). In German, a rich morphology and relatively free word order require profound linguistic processing by computer to provide useful and grammatically correct writing support. EasyTalk implements the grammar of LS in a Natural Language Generator. Following the repetitive structures and basic lexical patterns of LS sentences, EasyTalk aims to support users in writing freely while practicing general linguistic concepts at the same time;
(2) stimulating to add explicit Rhetorical Relation Theory (RST)-inspired coherence specifications (couched in conjunctions like "weil/because") to express the communicative function of the sentences.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Embracing diversity in clinical practice – Key strategies to support individuals with complex communication needs

Ekis, Stephanie - Author

Submission ID

65

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Last year brought many challenges that had a direct impact on how Speech-Language Therapists (SLTs) deliver services. In addition to a global pandemic, which pushed traditional in-person therapy to a virtual format, we also experienced social and racial unrest like many of us had never seen before in our lifetimes. We witnessed daily protesting in the name of racial justice, and we saw the Black Lives Matter movement go global. Many of us were compelled to reflect on our own unconscious bias and take action to make change. For SLTs who support students with complex communication needs, key considerations related to diversity should be critically reviewed during the evaluation and implementation process. Individuals with complex communication needs who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) are particularly vulnerable to a lack of inclusive practices. It is imperative that the AAC systems available to them represent their cultural, linguistic, and gender identity and/or sexual orientation. With heighted awareness and sensitivity to the importance of diversity, cultural and linguistic competencies in clinical practice, many SLTs have begun to evaluate their own biases and evaluate how diversity and representation is acknowledged in their clinical practice. This session will focus on key action items for SLTs to consider as they identify ways to better support diversity and cultural competencies in their practice. Using checklists, commonly used therapy materials, case studies, and data from round-table discussions, participants will leave with a toolkit of resources and action items that will better equip them to serve diverse populations.

References (Optional)

Crais, E., Lister, J., Tellis, G., & Nunez, L. (2018). Recruiting, retaining, and graduating PhD students: Practical ideas from 73 communication sciences and disorders PhD program coordinators. Perpectives of The ASHA Special Interest Groups, SIG 10, Vol. 3(Part 1). https://doi.org/10.1044/persp3.SIG10.4

Deal-Williams, V. (2020, June) Addressing disparities in the wake of injustice, violence, and COVID-19. Leader Live. https://leader.pubs.asha.org/do/10.1044/2020-0601-addressing-disparities-of-injustice/full/

Humbert, I. (2020, September 29). Black Rockette: Perspectives of a black female speech language pathologist in academia. Medium. https://medium.com/@ihumbert/black-rockette-perspectives-of-a-black-female-speech-language-pathologist-in-academia-9573d6d5947d

Rodriguez, J. C. (2016). Our clients are diverse, why aren't we?, The ASHA Leader 21(5). https://doi.org/10.1044/leader.SSAY.21052016.40

Thompson, D. (2013). The 33 Whitest jobs in America. The Atlantic Magazine.

https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/11/the-33-whitest-jobs-inamerica/281180/

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

While Stephanie is a full time employee at Tobii Dynavox, resources and strategies discussed during this presentation will be applicable to any low or high-tech AAC system/program.

Emergent writing with Google Slides

Rabe, Heidi - Author

Submission ID

66

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

EVERY person, regardless of age, grade, cognitive and functional level, can produce written content that is meaningful to them. However, people who have significant motor, cognitive and communication challenges often have limited opportunities to produce written work and are often not provided literacy instruction. Google Slides can be a fun, versatile, and interactive way to support emergent writers to compose for a variety of purposes and help them see the value of writing. During this session, we will explore different types of text created by people who use AAC during teletherapy and discuss the pros and cons of using Google Slides for emergent writers. By the end of the presentation, participants will be able to describe at least three authentic writing opportunities that people they support can engage in throughout their day. They will also be able to describe the behind the scenes set up to support emergent writers using Google Slides.

References (Optional)

Erickson, Karen A and Koppenhaver, David A (2020). Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write. Brookes Publishing.
Davis, K., Sweeney, S., (2015). Reading, Writing and AAC: Mobile Technology Strategies for Literacy and Language Development. Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 24, 19-25. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1044/aac24.1.19
Hart, P. (2006). Spelling Considerations for AAC Intervention. Perspective on Augmentative Alternative Communication, 15, 12-14. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1044/aac15.2.12

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Environmental Factors related to writing for people with speech impairments and physical disability who use AAC: Scoping Review

Finak, Paulina - Author; Gaurav, Navjit - Co-Author; McEachern, Diane - Co-Author; Batorowicz, Beata - Co-Author

Submission ID

58

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Research demonstrates that up to 90% of children with complex communication needs do not reach functional literacy in adulthood [1], and 70-80% of children with speech impairments stay behind their peers [2], yet we know that some of these children can become fully literate [3]. The specific reasons why some of these children do not attain functional literacy are not well understood, and theoretical models suggest the combination of personal and environmental factors as contributing factors [4]. Up to date research in literacy and AAC has focused on a) the intrinsic, cognitive factors that may contribute to literacy development (e.g., phonological awareness, memory, and vocabulary development [5-14], and b) skills-focused intervention strategies for reading and spelling [1,15-19]. The present scoping study examines research evidence about how the environmental factors are related to writing for people with physical disabilities who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). The following databases are searched: ERIC, PsychInfo, Embase, CINAHL, Medline, Educational Source and Omni (Queen's library home page, search, and discovery tool). The search terms used were: "AAC, literacy, reading, writing, spelling". Articles will be exported to Covidence. They were screened first by title and abstract by two independent examiners, and conflicts were resolved by a third reviewer. The full-text articles were independently screened by two examiners, and conflicts were resolved by a third reviewer. The resulting articles are summarized. The analysis will report on how the environmental factors are related to writing for people with a physical disability who use AAC. The authors will present the research evidence by themes of environmental factors related to writing for people with physical disabilities who use AAC. The evidence base will be useful for therapists, teachers, and parents, in helping them to facilitate an environment that is most conducive to the development of literacy.

References (Optional)

[1] Foley, B., Wolter, J. (2010). Literacy intervention for transition-aged youth: what is and what could be. Language, Literacy and AAC Issues for Transition-Age Youth, 35-68.
[2] Schatschneider, C. & Westberg, L. (2005). Findings from the National Early Literacy Panel: Implications for early screening.
[3] American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA). (n.d.) Literacy in Individuals with Severe Disabilities. www.asha.org

[4] Batorowicz, B., King, G., Mishra, L, Missiuna, C. (2016). An integrated model of social environmental and social context for pediatric rehabilitation. Disability and Rehabilitation, 38(12), 1204-1215. Doi:10.3109/09638288.2015.1076070. Dahlgren Sandberg, A. (2006). Reading and spelling abilities in children with severe speech impairments and cerebral palsy at 6,9, and 12 years of age in relation to cognitive development: A longitudinal study. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 48, 629-634.
[5] Dahlgren Sandberg, A. (2001). Reading and spelling, phonological awareness and working memory in children with severe speech impairments: A longitudinal study. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 17(1), 11-26. Doi:1080/aac.17.1.11.26.
[6] Arterberry, M., Bornstein, M., Midgett, C. (2007). Early attention and literacy experiences predict adaptive communication. First Language, 27(2), 175-189.
[7] Bishop, D. (1985). Spelling ability in congenital dysarthria: Evidence against articulatory coding in translating between phonemes and graphemes. Cognitive Neuropsychology, 2(3), 229-251. Doi:10.1080/02643298508252867.
[8] Bishop, D., Robson, J. (1989). Unimpaired short-term memory and rhyme judgment in congenitally speechless individuals: Implications for the notion of 'articulatory coding'. The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 41(1), 123-140. Doi:10.1080/14640748908402356.
[9] Bishop, D., Brown, B., Robson, J. (1990). The relationship between phoneme discrimination, speech production and language comprehension in cerebral-palsied individuals. Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research, 33(2), 210-219. Doi:10.1044/jshr.3302.210.
[10] Smith, M., Sandberg, D., Larsson, M. (2009). Reading and spelling in children with severe speech and physical impairments: A comparative study. International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders, 44(6), 864-882. Doi:10.3109/13682820802389873.
[11] Taibo, M., Iglesias, P., Raposo, M., Mendez, M. (2010). An exploratory study of phonological awareness and working memory differences and literacy performance of people that use AAC. Spanish Journal of Psychology, 13(2), 538-556. Doi:10.1017/S1138741600002237.
[12] Dahlgren Sandberg, A., Hjelmquist, E. (1996). Phonologic awareness and literacy abilities in nonspeaking preschool children with cerebral palsy. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 12(3), 138-153.
[13] Dahlgren Sandberg, A., Hjelmquist, E. (1997). Language and literacy in nonvocal children with cerebral palsy. An Interdisciplinary Journal, 9, 107-133.
[14] Foley, B., Pollatsek, A. (1999). Phonological processing and reading abilities in adolescents and adults with severe congenital speech impairments. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 15(3), 156-173. Doi:10.1080/07434619912331278695.
Erickson, K., Koppenhaver, D. Comprehensive literacy for all: Teaching students with significant disabilities to read and write. Baltimore: Brookes, 2020.
[15] Foley, B., Staples, A. (2003). Developing augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and literacy interventions in a supported employment setting. Topics in Language Disorders, 23(4), 325-343. Retrieved from: https://journals.lww.com/topicsinlanguagedisorders.
[16] Cunningham, A., Stanovich, K. (1991). Tracking the unique effects of print exposure in children: Associations with vocabulary, general knowledge, and spelling. Journal of Educational Psychology, 83(2), 264-274. Doi:10.1037/0022-0663.83.2.264.
[17] Guthrie, J., Schafer, W., Huang, C. (2001). Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced instruction on the NAEP. Journal of Educational Research, 94(3), 145-162.
[18] Koppenhaver, D., Yoder, D. (1993). Classroom literacy instruction for children with severe speech and physical impairments (SSPI): What is and what might be. Topics in Language Disorders, 13(2), 1-15. Doi:10.1097/00011363-199302000-00003.

[19] Light, J., McNaughton, D. (2015). Designing AAC research and intervention to improve outcomes for individuals with complex communication needs. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 31(2), 85-96. Doi:10.3109/07434618.2015.1036458.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Establishing and developing the London AAC Journal Club

Bearcroft, Ruth - Co-Author; Malik, Samia - Co-Author; Parsons, Clare - Author

Submission ID

11

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The London AAC Journal Club was established by three Speech & Language Therapists from different London trusts in 2017. We are affiliated with the London AAC CEN. We meet regularly (previously in public places, more recently online) to discuss a specific AAC topic; previous topics have included Eye gaze, Social media, ASD, PMLD and Advances in Technology. We aim to make evidence based practice both accessible and clinically relevant. Paper discussions include critical appraisal but are equally focused on implications for clinical practice. Regular guest hosts support with choosing topics, suggesting research papers and facilitating discussions. The club has expanded to having over 100 members and welcoming participants from outside London as well as from other professions including Teaching and Occupational Therapy. During the presentation we will discuss the lessons that we have learned from running a journal club, the results of our survey which looked at the impact of the club on participants' clinical work and thinking, and future directions for the club.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Exploring Collaborative Practice between Speech and Language Therapists and Parents of Children who use Augmentative & Alternative Communication

Hayward, Sarah - Author; Clarke, Michael - Co-Author

Submission ID

44

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Working in collaboration is vital for successful outcomes in healthcare, however little is known about how professionals form successful partnerships with parents, particularly in the context of speech and language therapy and specifically in AAC therapy. Aim To explore collaborative practice between SLTs and parents of children who would benefit from AAC. This project aimed to answer the question: How do parents of children with minimal speech & speech and language therapists experience collaboration? Methods and Procedures A three-stage methodology was used to answer the research question. i) A literature review to identify theoretical perspectives which underpin work in collaborative practice within healthcare. ii) Semi-structured interviews with five parents of pre-school children, seven parents of school aged children and fourteen SLTs. iii) Consensus work, consisting of focus groups following the nominal group technique took place within the study day of a clinical excellence network. Interview data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Themes from the interview data and nominal group were compared to theoretical perspectives. Outcomes and results Four themes on the concept and construct of collaboration, such as interdependency, were drawn from the literature review. Two superordinate themes were generated from the interview data: i) issues around identity and ii) experiences of relationship. These themes link with SLTs relational and participatory practices which contribute to the concept of collaboration. Both parents and SLTs value collaborative practice. Parents emphasised relational practices which spoke to the themes of identity and experiences of relationship. SLTs placed more emphasis on participatory practices. Conclusions and implications Collaborative relationships are an essential part of AAC therapy. Collaborative practice depends on a combination of relational and participatory practices. Parents value therapeutic relationships as a pre-requisite for engagement in therapy. SLTs would benefit from additional training in relational practices to address issues around parent identity.

References (Optional)

Agreli, H. F., Peduzzi, M., & Bailey, C. (2017). Contributions of team climate in the study of interprofessional collaboration: A conceptual analysis. Journal of Interprofessional Care, 31(6), 679–684. https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2017.1351425
An, M., & Palisano, R. J. (2014, March 29). Family-professional collaboration in pediatric rehabilitation: A practice model. Disability and Rehabilitation.

https://doi.org/10.3109/09638288.2013.797510
D'Amour, D., Goulet, L., Labadie, J. F., Martín-Rodriguez, L. S., & Pineault, R. (2008). A model and typology of collaboration between professionals in healthcare organizations. BMC Health Services Research, 8, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-8-188
Klatte, I. S., Lyons, R., Davies, K., Harding, S., Marshall, J., McKean, C., & Roulstone, S. (2020). Collaboration between parents and SLTs produces optimal outcomes for children attending speech and language therapy: Gathering the evidence. International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders, 55(4), 618–628. https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12538
Mandak, K., & Light, J. (2018b). Family-centered services for children with complex communication needs: the practices and beliefs of school-based speech-language pathologists. AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 34(2), 130–142. https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618.2018.1438513
WHO. (2010). Human Resources for Health Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education & Collaborative Practice. World Health Organization, WHO/HRH/HP, 1–64.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Eyes On Communication – Clinical Guidelines for Eye-Gaze Control for People with Cerebral Palsy

Karlsson, Petra - Author; Griffiths, Tom - Author; Monbaliu, Elegast - Co-Author; Clarke, Michael - Co-Author; Himmelmann, Kate - Co-Author; Bekteshi, Sarandra - Co-Author; Allsop, Abigail - Co-Author; Pereskles, René - Co-Author; Wallen, Margaret - Author; Galea, Claire - Co-Author

Submission ID

69

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

In early 2021, the Eyes on Communication team published Clinical Guidelines for the assessment, trial, implementation, support and review of eye-gaze technology. The team was motivated to develop the Clinical Guidelines as there is almost no literature available to support decision-making concerning the use of eye-gaze control technology as an access method (Karlsson, Allsop, Dee-Price, & Wallen, 2018; Perfect, Hoskin, Noyek, & Davies, 2020). The process of developing the Clinical Guidelines was intended to provide insight about "who" would be the most appropriate candidates for the use of eye-gaze technology, "what" technology is most effective, "when" it is best introduced, "how" it should be implemented and how the outcomes should be measured. The Clinical Guidelines are the result of a Delphi study which involved extensive consultation with many stakeholder groups, including people with cerebral palsy, their families, professionals from health and education, researchers and biomedical engineers. Items which achieved consensus across stakeholders were included in the final guidelines. They are intended for use by people with cerebral palsy, their support networks and professionals making decisions about eye-gaze control technology. The Clinical Guidelines are freely available to anyone and to date have been downloaded by over 450 people worldwide. This presentation will showcase the eight sections of the guidelines, highlighting points of interest and discussing their implications for clinical practice. This will cover assessment, trial, learning, teaching and support, as well as measuring outcomes and how best to proceed if eye-gaze is not currently the best access method for a user. The authors will also discuss the process used to develop the guidelines and the next steps for the Eyes on Communication team and this project. There will be opportunities for feedback and we are interested to hear delegates' feedback, particularly if people have downloaded and used the Clinical Guidelines.

References (Optional)

Karlsson, P., Griffiths, T., Clarke, M. T., Monbaliu, E., Himmelmann, K., Bekteshi, S., … Wallen, M. (2021). Stakeholder consensus for decision making in eye-gaze control technology for children, adolescents and adults with cerebral palsy service provision: findings from a Delphi study. BMC Neurology, 21(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12883-021-02077-z

Perfect, E., Hoskin, E., Noyek, S., & Davies, T. C. (2020). A systematic review investigating outcome measures and uptake barriers when children and youth with complex disabilities use eye gaze assistive technology. Developmental Neurorehabilitation, 23(3), 145–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/17518423.2019.1600066

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Families and SLPs/SLTs as Partners

Bereiter, Amy - Author; Seiff, Jenn - Co-Author

Submission ID

57

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

In order for AAC intervention to be effective, SLPs/SLTs and families must work closely together to identify goals and priorities, identify roles and responsibilities, collaborate regarding implementation, and monitor progress. In addition to technical knowledge of AAC devices, knowledge of various language representation methods found in AAC systems, deep knowledge of language development and intervention, and knowledge of the evidence base, SLPs/SLTs must understand and utilize the perspectives and experiences of the AAC user and their family to inform their practice. Implementation must include family priorities and consider the family dynamic. Failure to do so may result in device abandonment, AAC use in limited contexts, and overall poorer outcomes for the AAC user. This presentation will discuss the working relationship between one SLP, an AAC user, and his family across several years, settings, and service delivery models (including telehealth). It will include discussion on strategies for successful teaming and highlight the immense importance of AAC in the broader context of family and life.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

From isolation to Friendship: The role of high tech AAC in social development and social integration of children with complex needs: case study from a private clinic in Greece

Skarlopoulou, Vikki - Author

Submission ID

83

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Friendship and acceptance from peers are significant factors in social-emotional development and self-esteem of every child/teenager (Azmita, 1998). According to research, children with complex needs present with difficulties in social skills and social communication which result in limited opportunities for them to develop friendships and have opportunities to be part of a group of peers (Light, 1998). These limitations not only deprive them of the chances to develop self-esteem but also put them at risk of social isolation. If a child is socially isolated then their social-emotional development is also affected (Beukelman, 1992). Therefore, the ultimate goal of intervention should be to develop communicative competence and to enable participation to society and peer-groups. This case study focuses on a child with complex needs (Joubert syndrome) referred to a private clinic in Athens, Greece. He didn't have any means of communication in the past and prior to SLT input his parents anticipated all of his needs. The child had self-injured behavior and was very negative in engagement. A specialized high-tech system was introduced followed by a combination of social communication intervention in social settings and a relationship based model. The main focus of the intervention was functional communication skills, pragmatics and participation which was achieved with co-regulation and positive engagement. Intervention was divided into four levels starting from 1:1 intervention in clinic and ending in joining in a peer-group. An improvement in social skills and participation was noted and he was able to stay and participate in a group of peers without self-injury behavior or being isolated. This case study highlights how AAC supported this child to take important steps towards social integration and friendship.

References (Optional)

Kate Anderson, Susan Balandin & Sally Clendon (2011) "He Cares About Me and I Care About Him." Children's Experiences of Friendship with Peers who use AAC, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 27:2, 77-90
Janice Light & David McNaughton (2014) Communicative Competence for Individuals who require Augmentative and Alternative Communication: A New Definition for a New Era of Communication?, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 30:1, 1-18
Lilienfeld, M., & Alant, E. (2005). The social interaction of an adolescent who uses AAC: The

evaluation of a peer-training program. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 21(4), 278–294.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

How do people who use alternate augmentative communication use multi-modal communication in real-life situations? A Literature Review.

Moran, Charlie - Author; Randall, Nicola - Co-Author

Submission ID

13

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Context: There is a widely held view amongst professionals that people who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) benefit from using a variety of tools and strategies in combination to communicate most effectively across a range of situations. However, in the course of clinical practice, members of the Barnsley Assistive Technology Team have observed that powered and paper-based AAC systems are typically used as mutually exclusive systems and that paper-based systems can be perceived as under-valued and under-utilised as technology rapidly evolves. Aim: To explore this matter further, we carried out a literature review to determine what is already known, beyond anecdotal evidence, about how people who use AAC employ different strategies and skills in real-life communication. Content: This presentation will summarise the findings of the literature review and potential areas for future research in terms of: - Is there published evidence recommending multi-modal communication for people who use AAC? - Do people who use AAC employ multi-modal communication and if so, what form(s) does it take? - How is multi-modal communication developed by people who use AAC? Is it inherent, taught or developed incidentally? - Are there published recommendations for how to achieve multi-modal communication amongst people who use AAC? Significance: The findings from this literature review will inform a wider project to explore use of multi-modal communication on a current specialist AAC service caseload, and to investigate whether any resources can (or should) be developed to promote and support the use of multi-modal communication amongst people who use AAC.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

How might AAC technologies be designed differently to support interactions involving children with severe speech and physical impairments?

Ibrahim, Seray - Author; Clarke, Michael - Co-Author; Vasalou, Asimina - Co-Author

Submission ID

17

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technologies already transform children's lives by providing the option of speech through digital means and by offering a variety of language displays, input methods and hardware configurations. Interaction design and multimodal interaction research shows that we can extend the capabilities of these technologies by critically considering the roles that AAC technologies can take during in-person interactions. Based on empirical qualitative research involving children with severe speech and physical impairments, we share four ideas for designing augmentative and alternative communication technologies by: 1. respecting children's expertise and agency; 2. supporting child-initiated communication; 3. regulating the orderings of communication modes and social structures, and; 4. advancing involvement through play. The insights that are discussed will be of interest to AAC industry, education and therapy practitioners who have a role in designing AAC interventions, as well as to people who use AAC.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

Identity, Diversity and Inclusion in Augmentative and Alternative Communication - What are we doing and how can we do better?

Blandford, Hannah - Author; Lee, Andrea - Co-Author; Steiner, Nikky - Co-Author; Touliatou, Maria - Co-Author; Whittle, Helen - Co-Author; Birch, Tiffany - Co-Author; Preece, Jamie - Co-Author

Submission ID

64

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Representing identity and culture in alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) is an important factor in acceptance and functional integration for that system (Allan, 2006, Wickenden, 2011), but are we appropriately exploring the concept of identity for the diverse population we work with? We have formed a working group for those with an interest in this area to reflect on our own practice and to explore how we can improve discussion around the complex concepts of diversity and inclusion with AAC users. This talk hopes to provide an update on the work that we are undertaking to help bring this issue to forefront of our thinking. We will talk about different resources that have been created within our services to facilitate reflection among professionals and also tools for exploring these issues with the individuals and families we work with. These resources are a starting point in a much wider conversation about how we develop our cultural humility and inquiry to ensure that we are supporting the provision and implementation of representative systems for AAC users. We welcome participation within this talk to help further this important conversation. We know that this is a topic that will evolve with time and want to consider how we can keep ourselves in the best position to be responsive and inquisitive to ensure that AAC users feel appropriately represented by the system they're using.

References (Optional)

Allan, M. (2006). AAC and Self-Identity. Communication Matters. Vol 20 (3): 9-12
Wickenden, M. (2011) Whose voice is that? Issues of identity, voice and representation arising in an ethnographic study of the lives of disabled teenagers who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Disability Studies Quarterly. Vol 31 (4)

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Individualising the Curriculum with AAC.

Stanton, Marion - Author; Pedrosa, Catia - Co-Author; Reeves, Hannah - Co-Author

Submission ID

77

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This presentation focuses on how AAC may have much wider usage than communication. AAC software that is traditionally used to create vocabularies has the potential to change the learning and adult life opportunities of students who rely on it. However, it requires a different approach to software editing and potentially on how it is developed. In order to learn, students need to have the least physically demanding access to reading and writing so that they can concentrate on the cognitive task rather than trying to accurately target. Mishits need to be avoided and the software needs crafting so that the student can independently learn rather than relying on assistants to hold books, read materials and scribe. This puts the learning in the hands of the student rather than being mediated by the assistant. This results in a better learning outcome as the student controls the pace and process of their own learning. The presentation will show how this can be achieved so that the student's working memory, word retrieval, physical access, and output rate is maximised, improving their learning and assessment outcomes. Examples of software designed for communication being adapted for learning will be demonstrated showing how it can be utilised as a genuine learning aid as well as a communication aid. The importance of actively bridging through stages of learning using AAC communication software will be described as will the importance of teachers scaffolding learning in the same way that a non-disabled student is routinely supported. Individualizing learning materials will be emphasised and explained. The relatively new learning theory of connectivism along with social constructivist theory will be outlined to explain the underpinning of this approach.

References (Optional)

(2017). The Promise of Assistive Technology to Enhance Activity and Work Participation. In The Promise of Assistive Technology to Enhance Activity and Work Participation. https://doi.org/10.17226/24740

Davis, P., Florian, L., Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., Farrell, P., Hick, P., Humphrey, N., Jenkins, P., Kaplan, I., Palmer, S., Parkinson, G., Polat, F., Reason, R., Byers, R., Dee, L., Kershner, R., & Rouse, M. (2004). Teaching Strategies and Approaches for Pupils with Special Educational Needs: A Scoping Study. Research Report No. 516, 516(2004), 11–14.

del Valle García Carreño, I. (2014). Theory of Connectivity as an Emergent Solution to Innovative Learning Strategies. American Journal of Educational Research, 2(2), 107–116. https://doi.org/10.12691/education-2-2-7

Howery, K. L. L. (2015). Literature Review: Conditions for Success in Augmentative and Alternative Communication Practice Prepared for Calgary and Area Regional Collaborative Service Delivery by: Table of Contents. November.

Solomon-rice, P. L. (2010). Enhancing the Language Skills of Preschoolers with Severe Communication Difficulties Who Benefit from AAC: Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Intelligent AAC...What can artificial intelligence offer?

Waller, Annalu - Author

Submission ID

113

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The term “Artificial Intelligence” or “AI” has entered into the daily news. Whether it is a scare story about intrusion into our lives or experimental brain implants for communication, we are led to believe that AI will revolutionise our lives. But what is AI? And how can it support AAC? We will explore AI by looking at its history and areas such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Computer Vision, discussing the potential of how AI can impact AAC.

References (Optional)

aac.dundee.ac.uk/
Black R, Waller R, Turner R, Reiter E. (2012). Supporting Personal Narrative for Children with Complex Communication Needs. ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction, 19(2), Article 15. 10.1145/2240156.2240163 http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2240156.2240163.
Grove N. (2009). Learning to Tell: A Handbook for Inclusive Storytelling. BILD Publications.
Waller A. (2018). Telling Tales: Unlocking the Potential of AAC Technologies. International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders. Published Online – 31 December, 11 p. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1460-6984.12449
Waller A, Black R, O'Mara D, Pain H, Ritchie G, Manurung R. (2009). Evaluating the STANDUP pun generating software with children with cerebral palsy. ACM Transactions on Accessible Computing (TACCESS), 1(3), ACM 16:0-16:27. https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/1497302.1497306

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Investigation of Communication Abilities and Quality of Life for People with Aphasia by using Talking Mats in Speech and Language Therapy

Eden, Viktoria - Author; Pampoulou, Eliada - Author; Murphy, Joan - Co-Author

Submission ID

47

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Background: Talking Mats (TM) is a tool used in the Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC) field, which can support people with complex communication needs, such as those with aphasia, to communicate their views and ideas with their communication partners. Objective: This study focuses on the use of TM beyond its usual use as a communication tool. It explores the effects of using TM in speech and language therapy on communication abilities and quality of life of a person with aphasia. Methods and Procedures: The research design comprised a single case study with an AAABA Design. The participant was a 35-year-old female with mild, anomic aphasia, six years post onset. At baseline level, the Western Aphasia Battery (WAB) and the Stroke and Aphasia Quality of Life Scale-39 (SAQOL-39) were administered to the participant, followed by 10 days consecutive use of TM in a therapeutic setting. Results: Clear improvement of communication abilities, such as word fluency, supports the assumption that TM could be integrated in the therapeutic repertoire of speech and language interventions. Auditory word recognition and the SAQOL-39 mean score were decreased. Conclusions: The TM framework might not only serve as a communication tool, but also, as a method to train vocabulary recall and discourse in people with a mild type of aphasia, such as the anomic form. However, this is a single-case study and the results might prompt further investigation into how the Talking Mats framework could be used in this way.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Investigation of the AAC assessment process in school settings

Pampoulou, Eliada - Author; Theodorou, Eleni - Co-Author

Submission ID

48

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication has been significantly evolving in many countries of the world. However, in Cyprus recent findings show that it is still in its infant stages. It is widely recognised that there is direct link between comprehensive assessment and intervention outcomes. Considering that AAC practices in Cyprus have yet to mature, this study was aimed at exploring the assessment practices as this is the foundation for successful intervention planning. The aim of the current study was to identify the assessment practices of speech and language therapists who provide services in school settings, both in general and special schools. Data were collected from 89 participants who completed a questionnaire distributed to all speech and language therapists, who at the time, worked in school settings. It covered a wide range of aspects relating to AAC assessment practices. For the purposes of this presentation only some of the areas will be discussed. These are the profile of the pupils who receive assessment, the stimuli used during assessment, the means of communication by assessors and the assistive technology equipment deployed. The findings show that AAC assessment is primarily focused on pupils with cerebral palsy. During the assessment process, participants commented that they used a variety of stimuli, with predominantly these being auditory and visual, whilst they used touch, smell and taste to a much lesser extent. The means of communication that participants used during the assessment process (beyond the verbal interaction) were mainly objects, photographs and pictures, with facial expressions, gestures and signs being utilised to a lesser degree. In terms of the assistive technology equipment used, these were mainly talking products, tablets, smartphones and relevant software. It is concluded that a number of insights have emerged that can facilitate AAC assessment practices in school settings.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Journey Towards A Total Communication Environment

Wood, Laura - Author

Submission ID

46

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Creating a positive and consistent total communication environment can be a challenge in residential provisions for people with a learning disability. In 2019 the SLT team at David Lewis began the 'Journey' project, with the aim of offering guidance and encouragement to create more supportive communication environments across site. The project work included meeting with registered and residential managers, creating the step-by-step resource 'Journey Towards A Total Communication Environment' and rolling out an associated training package across site. The David Lewis Centre is a residential provision and college in Cheshire supporting people with complex needs including learning disabilities, epilepsy and autism. The multidisciplinary team includes Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Psychology Support, working closely with residential and college staff to support all our service users to reach their full potential. The 'Journey' resource and resultant training aimed to break down some initial steps services can take to make it easier for good communication to flourish, and was designed with 'Five Good Communication Standards' in mind, as well as other RCSLT documentation. It includes discussions around storage solutions for communication equipment, availability of symbol-making resources, environmental labelling options, and resources for supporting independence. The project as a whole also included the SLT team developing both their training calendar to best meet site needs and their Communication Representative programme, to work more closely with staff within services. The project is still on-going (currently on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions) but initial progress has been made in increased Communication Representative numbers, a wider variety of SLT training in place and the 'Journey' resource offering more structure to provisions keen to make improvements to their total communication environments.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Lock Down With The Hewsons

Hewson, Helen - Author

Submission ID

8

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

In this paper I will be discussing how Toby and I kept ourselves busy and active during the various lock downs that we have faced together. I will be sharing some of the things we have done to keep ourselves occupied and entertained. I will be sharing some of the challenges we have had with trying to keep ourselves and our staff team members safe. I will be talking about living further away from my family and suddenly having to go months without seeing my parents for support. I will be talking about some of the fun activities that we still managed to do and enjoy with our assistants. I will be talking about some of the anxiety and fears that I faced during the early stages of lock down. The impact that the lock had on me, both mentally and emotionally.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Lockdown Learning: ATmentor Style

Lenartowicz, Adam - Author; Sillars, Sam - Author; Featon, Sally - Co-Author; Sephton, Francesca - Co-Author

Submission ID

29

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Following a presentation by our colleague, Gregor Gilmour, last year, we have further developed the way we work remotely as an ATmentor team. For lots of our mentees, live remote sessions are challenging for many reasons including attention and listening difficulties, technical problems and environmental factors such as loud background noise. Within this presentation we plan to share two case study examples of how we worked with our mentees using pre-recorded video content to work on mentoring goals. We will hear from the mentees themselves, one of our ATmentor managers, Sally Featon, and will outline the benefits of pre-recorded videos and lessons learnt along the way. The COVID pandemic has been a challenging time for lots of AAC users and being able to continue mentoring support via this platform has been really effective in enabling people to stay connected whilst continuing to develop their skills using AAC. For further information, please contact: info@attherapy.co.uk

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Mentoring Project - a visual update

Elliott, Verity - Author

Submission ID

28

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Communication Matters is in the 3rd year of a 5-year project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The project so far has been really successful with a number of AAC users completing a range of qualifications from Entry Level 3 to Level 1. These include Personal & Social Development, Mentoring and Employability. The funding is for AAC users in England and we have been able to continue our project over the last year via Zoom and Teams and 1-1 support as we adapted our approach; this enabled greater access for our learners as they could work from home or with support from their school/college. We hope to be able to meet for face-to-face delivery when it is safe to do so but we will keep our distance learning as it has proven to be really useful. The learning from the project to date has enabled us to develop a range of visual and adapted resources. We are preparing an animation about Mentoring and also adapting our learning resources that will include symbols. The aim is to offer information and greater accessibility. We still have two more years of funding available and we hope to be able to create more animations, develop our resources and expand the learning opportunities to more AAC users.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

My Communication Matters too!

Higgins, Andy - Author

Submission ID

107

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Hi, my name is Andy Higgins. At the age of 32, I suffered from having a brainstem stroke in 2003. This trauma rendered me into a state where I was unable to talk or make any voluntary movement. This condition is called ‘Locked-in syndrome, I could only blink my eyes during these early months. Before my trauma I considered myself to be a great communicator, did losing my speech mean that I had lost all of my communication skills? My means of communication during this early stage would be by somebody holding a large alphabet board up in front of me then they would scan its letters until I blinked. I hated this way of communicating. Between 2003 and 2008 after I had regained slight movement in my left arm and hand a mobile phone with a qwerty keyboard would enable me to text, email and have restricted access to the internet. At this point, I was living my life without having any direction. It wouldn’t be until 2008 when I was introduced to eyegaze, after trialing this new technology I instantly realised that this device had the potential to enable me to communicate more effectively, access further education and possibly even do some form of employment. In 2021, Assistive aid technology has enabled me to communicate more effectively, access further education and gain paid employment. The thing that matters to me most of all is that I can share my lived-in experience through the work that I do with regards to supporting people who could benefit from using Assistive Technology and Independent living. I can finally apply all of my communication skills without having to speak one word.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Adult

My journey to and with AAC

Pistorius, Martin - Author

Submission ID

109

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Life as I knew it changed dramatically when I contracted a brain infection at the age of twelve. I was left trapped inside my body and unable to communicate. During my presentation I will share some of my experiences obtaining an AAC system and communicating through AAC. How AAC enabled me to transform my life. I aim to also provide some insight into how I have found communicating using AAC within the work context, as well as the challenges of being a parent who uses AAC.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

My life as an AAC user

Shearer, Sarah-jane - Author

Submission ID

110

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Hi I am Sarah Jane shearer and I am 21. I live in Renfrew. I got my first communication device when I was six. I went to my first communication matters in 2018 which was in Leeds. While I was there I got a loan of the Accent 1400! I couldn't believe my luck. It was amazing I love it so much. I really wanted my own one. In 2019, I got asked to do a speech in Dunfermline which was a very proud moment of me. After my speech, I got told that I got the funding for the Accent 1400! So, moving forward to 2020, I got involved with AT Mentor. We mentor people with AAC. I haven't got a mentee yet. I work on social media for AT Mentor. I do the sign of the week which I am proud of. I have my level two in mentoring. I have done a presentation for Call Scotland about the service which made me proud of! We also raise money for communication matters. We done a talkathon to raise money for communication matters. I did a guess the sound. We attend a workshop every month. We also have social events like Christmas night. I have made a lot of friends through having been friends. I am also involved with the AAC user focus group. I am also a member of the order of perpetual indulgence. What is that? Well, we dressed up as nuns and we spread enjoy. We all have different names from our real name so my name is Accessie Bility. I read out books through my AAC for children. When I became a novice I programmed polari in my AAC and I am the first AAC user in the order. I love my AAC so much!

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

One Special School's Journey with Communication and Literacy

Stanton, Marion - Author; Maskell-Ludlow, Emma - Co-Author

Submission ID

78

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Sandside Lodge is a special school in Ulverston, Cumbria embracing AAC which, spearheaded by Emma Maskell. Her experience with AAC began in her PMLD class in 2017 when she decided to supplement sensory classroom experiences with low-tech communication. Undaunted by disbelief of some staff and access difficulties for some students her 'if one way doesn't work try another way' approach led to two of her students qualifying for NHS AAC assessments and acquisition of high-tech communication aids. Another three received local funding for AAC devices. Meanwhile, senior leadership wanted to improve literacy teaching and took active steps to achieve this. As well as implementing a systematic, synthetic phonics programme across the school flexibility has been applied whereby individual students who benefit from more than synthetic phonics have access to other approaches. Those who need more include the majority of students who rely on AAC. These are the remaining students recognised as needing reading approaches additional to synthetic phonics evidenced by the initial Government report stating that the majority of, rather than all, students need to learn with synthetic phonics. Using local provision available through CandLE (Communication and Learning Enterprises) the school are learning about analytic phonics, analogic phonics, embedded phonics, and whole word approaches as well as ways in which communication software can also be put to good use for learning. These will be demonstrated in this presentation. With the application of this holistic approach students at Sandside Lodge look set to achieve their learning potential with higher learning outcomes than previously thought possible. Already there has been a noticeable increase in many student's communication ability due to literacy improvements and increased use of AAC throughout the school. This has empowered them, reduced frustration, increased engagement, and improved self-esteem.

References (Optional)

All Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology (n.d.). COMMUNICATION AND LITERACY: NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND INNOVATIONS TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF LITERACY FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY USERS.
Johnston, S. S., O'keeffe, B. V, & Stokes, K. (2018). Early Literacy Support for Students with Physical Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs Early Literacy and Students with PDCCN. TEACHING Exceptional Children, 51(2), 91–99. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059918802808
Peng, P., & Goodrich, J. M. (2020). The Cognitive Element Model of Reading Instruction. Reading Research Quarterly, 77–88. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.336

Rose, J. (2006). Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading Final Report. Independent Review, March. www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/phonics/report.pdf
Ruppar, A. L., Gaffney, J. S., & Dymond, S. K. (2015). Influences on Teachers' Decisions About Literacy for Secondary Students With Severe Disabilities. Exceptional Children, 81(2), 209–226. https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402914551739

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Partner Assisted Scanning oh my!

Rabe, Heidi - Author

Submission ID

84

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Partner assisted, automatic, step scanning, oh my! It can be hard to know the beginning of teaching scanning. But fear not, we will follow the yellow brick road as we explore one method of scanning. In partner-assisted scanning, a person gives options and waits for a yes/no response. These options may be one at a time or in groups, linear and group scanning. Depending on the response given to the options, the partner either continues giving options or changes the options as they navigate through a communication system. As we follow the path to learning about scanning to support emergent communicators or those with complex physical needs, we'll discuss when to use linear or group scanning and their pros and cons. As we continue our path to the Wizard, we will explore the characteristics of a smart partner and the need to establish some sort of yes/no response. The presenter will give tips and tricks of making the partner assisted scanning more efficient to help discover the inner partner-assisted scanning wizard in ourselves.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Passion for potential: developing expectation environments

Moulam, Beth - Author

Submission ID

9

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Attitudes and expectations can result in wildly differing educational and life experiences for everyone. Having a label of complex physical disability and using a communication aid since first attending school has resulted in wildly varying predictions from ‘there are no expectation she will ever get any qualifications’, to ‘we expect you to graduate from university with a first’. Breaking out from behind the label, and achieving and exceeding expectations is not solely down to the educational environment. Our journey as AAC users does not stop when we leave school, it will usually go on for decades longer. I’m a Paralympian and I’ve lived independently for 8 years. My communication journey has continued in new and exciting ways, especially as I develop essential leadership and training skills to manage my 24/7 support team. From an early age I’ve had a passion for potential. To help others succeed in fulfilling their communication and life potential. Everyone’s voyage through life is different. I’d like to share 3 things have contributed towards my own journey: 1. The importance of mindset in achieving potential. I have been greatly influenced in academic, sporting and general life by the work of Carol Dweck (2012), an American educational psychologist. 2. Combining passion and potential with having purpose. For me this means having clear plans for the future, not just the next goal but also a longer-term vision, and 8 simple steps to break these into manageable chunks. 3. Finally, my thoughts on the importance of being well supported life-long. This is a reflection on what I’ve learned is needed as an AAC user to develop and maintain independence and evolve communication and self-advocacy skills to be fit for life. Without doubt a growth expectation environment is essential.

References (Optional)

Dweck, C.S. (2012) ‘Mindset: how you can fulfil your potential’, Robinson, London

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Saying and Meaning in Interactions Involving Aided Communication

Smith, Martine - Author; Neuvonen, Kirsi - Co-Author

Submission ID

111

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

In every conversation, participants juggle the roles of speaker and listener. In their role as speaker, they try to influence the mind of the listener(s), using every communication tool at their disposal. As listeners, they try to decode the communication messages a speaker has generated and try to interpret what those messages might mean in order to understand what is in the speaker's mind. This means that all participants have to pay attention to what is said and also to what a speaker means by what they say. In interactions involving aided communication, challenges can arise in both processes – Saying and Meaning. By definition, aided communicators have to say their message using modes other than speech. These modes may be easily overlooked or misunderstood by their communication partners. In addition, aided communicators may have to make choices about what words to use to say what they want, often due to vocabulary limitations or limited spelling ability. What they can say may be an imperfect match to what they would like to say, if they had access to natural speech. Communication partners may find it difficult to recognize that something has been said. Alternatively, they may be able to decode what was said, but not be able to process what that might mean. In this presentation, we present data from the Becoming an Aided Communicator project (von Tetzchner, 2018), where young aided communicators were describing video events to partners who had not seen the videos. We use these extracts to explore the strategies used by both participants in the conversations to overcome some of the challenges of Saying and Meaning and consider what these strategies might mean for how we approach communication partner training.

References (Optional)

von Tetzchner, S. (2018). Introduction to the special issue on aided language processes, development, and use: an international perspective. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, (34), 1-15.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Schematic-taxonomic grid layout in high tech augmentative and alternative communication for adults with a learning disability.

Wadsworth, Sarah - Author

Submission ID

37

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The use of a schematic-taxonomic grid layout is introduced with reflection on why this combined layout should be considered as a new approach for successful implementation of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in the adult learning disability (LD) population. Previously AAC intervention in this demographic has been sparsely utilised and poorly sustained (Stancliffe, et al., 2010). By adulthood significant language development has plateaued for most individuals and for individuals with a moderate to severe LD their current language experience has been contextual and not linguistically organised (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Van Der Gaag, 2009). Consequently, a typical sematic-syntactic grid layout is less likely to be successful with this demographic, as it requires the introduction of a completely new and abstract language organisation (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2005). Further to this, many individuals with an LD face other barriers to accessing AAC: reduced working memory, limited life experiences (something evidenced to reduced language potential), inconsistent communication partners and potential physical barriers (Light & Lindsay, 1991; Thistle & Wilkinson, 2013). A schematic-taxonomic grid layout seeks to overcome some of these barriers and consequently make successful implementation of AAC more probable in the LD population. Discussion is given to the various types of grid layouts and a justification of their inclusion/exclusion when implementing AAC in this demographic. Examples given show how three young adults with moderate/severe LD have successfully been able to use a schematic-taxonomic grid layout to start communicating with those around them. The schematic-taxonomic grid layout does have its own limitations, but justification and evidence is given as to why it should be included as an effective and attainable way of introducing AAC in the adult LD population.

References (Optional)

• American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). Washington.
• Beukelman, D. R. & Mirenda, P. (2005). Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Supporting Children and Adults with Complex Communication Needs (Fourth ed.). Baltimore.
• Light, J. & Lindsay, P. (1991). Cognitive sciences and augmentative and alternative communication. Augmentative and alternative communication, 7(3), 186-203.
• Thistle, J. J., & Wilkinson, K. M. (2013). Working memory demands of aided augmentative

and alternative communication for individuals with developmental disabilities. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 29(3), 235-245.
https://doi.org/10.3109/07434618.2013.815800
• Van Der Gaag, A. (2009). The Communication Assessment Profile (Third ed.). Sussex.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Seven free apps you should know about to help your clients living with progressive or acquired neurological conditions

Cave, Richard - Author

Submission ID

36

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This session will demonstrate live seven free Android apps from installation to content creation - specific to your client.

- Find out how to support your client to control their own Android phone using voice to access all their loved apps.
- Learn a simple way to make calls or send texts using a one step-process with buttons that can be as large as the phone screen.
- Find out how people that use eye-gaze devices could still share their messages whenever their main device is not available (in the shower room or an emergency, for example).
- You can ask questions and share your views throughout the session.

If you have an Android device (Android 9 or higher), you can follow each step too.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

SPEAKplay! Training motor access on mobile devices for young communicators

Wendt, Oliver - Author

Submission ID

86

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This Lightning Talk will illustrate the development process of the mobile phone application SPEAK!play, to train the motor skills necessary to adequately access and operate augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) applications on mobile devices. SPEAKplay! teaches emerging communicators and very young AAC learners the proper motor access strategies to maximize operational competence and content access on mobile platforms. From an early intervention perspective, AAC experiences should be provided to learners with severe speech and language delay as early as 2 years of age (Davidoff, 2017). At such a young age, however, many young infants, especially when affected by developmental delay or disorders, do not possess fully developed fine motor skills to operate mobile devices with strong proficiency. Particularly for learners with neurodevelopmental disorders, it has been well documented that about 80% are affected by difficulties in fine or gross motor function (Hilton et al., 2012; Isenhower et al., 2012). The vast proliferation of mobile technology in the AAC space has resulted in a large number of AAC apps, but the majority of these require significant motor, cognitive, and sensory perceptual skills (Kagohara et al., 2010). These apps are often not accessible by those individuals who have complex motor, cognitive, and sensory perceptual impairments. The outcome of using SPEAKplay! is to enhance motor and executive functioning of the young child or first time AAC user to provide full access to mobile screen devices and maximize their operational competence in navigating touch-screen based content. SPEAKplay! was designed using a gamification approach. Gamification is a design paradigm for optimized human computer interaction that holds great promise to facilitate skill acquisition on mobile devices used in AAC. Essentially, gamification uses the most prominent elements of games and combines these elements with nongame components and contexts to motivate users to increase target behaviors (Goethe, 2019).

References (Optional)

Davidoff, B. (2017). AAC with energy – earlier. The ASHA Leader, 22(1), 50-53. Goethe, O. (2019). Gamification Mindset. Human–Computer Interaction Series. Springer, Cham, Switzerland.
Hilton, C. L., Zhang, Y., White, M. R., Klohr, C. L., & Constantino, J. (2012). Motor impairment in sibling pairs concordant and discordant for autism spectrum disorders. Autism, 16, 430-441.
Isenhower, R. W., Marsh, K. L., Richardson, M. J., Helt, M., Schmidt, R. C., & Fein, D. (2012). Rhythmic bimanual coordination is impaired in young children with autism spectrum

disorder. Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 6, 25-31.
Kagohara, D. M. , van der Meer , L. , Achmadi , D. , Green , V. A. , O ' Reilly , M. F. , Mulloy , A. , … Sigafoos , J . (2010). Behavioral intervention promotes successful use of an iPod-based communication device by an adolescent with autism. Clinical Case Studies, 9, 328 – 338 .

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Supporting AAC users to develop self acceptance and positive identity

Bowers, Emma - Author; Sephton, Francesca - Co-Author

Submission ID

52

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This presentation will introduce the practice-led service development of MyAbility. This has been a joint venture between ATtherapy, a highly specialist independent speech and language therapy service and Recolo, a community neuropsychology rehabilitation service. We have developed a clinical tool involving packs of resources for clinicians to structure and approach sensitive and emotional conversations about identity with their clients following a brain injury or those with a diagnosis of autism or cerebral palsy. We have developed packs for young people and adults as well as their parents or carers. We completed a feasibility study which demonstrated MyAbility's usefulness as a clinical tool for clinicians, young people and their parents using a small sample drawn during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The findings indicate that young people valued learning more about their diagnosis; talking about their feelings and perceptions of themselves currently and ideally in the future; connecting with others with similar experiences as well as acting out social situations to practice coping with uncomfortable experiences. Parents valued getting more support for their young person and clinicians found it useful to connect their young person with others and to explore their feelings and perceptions of the self. When analysing comments about MyAbility, it was found that it was helpful to open up sensitive conversations about feelings, to identify strengths and be able to focus on the future by aspiring to their own meaningful goals. AAC users that took part in the feasibility study sometimes had limited disability vocabulary. Jamie Preece (ATmentor) created bespoke resources for AAC users which will be shared within the presentation. Further applications and development of MyAbility will be discussed with the opportunity for attendees to be involved in future research.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

ATtherapy

Supporting PMLD gamers with Electronic Assistive Technology in a residential setting

Viera, Marc - Author; Knox, Ciara - Co-Author

Submission ID

21

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The Children's Trust (TCT) provides residential-rehabilitation and school-based services for children and young people (CYP) with a brain injury. These services often include assistive technology (AT), including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), embedded within leisure, educational and therapeutic activities to enhance inclusion and participation. The COVID19 crisis created barriers to AT staff going onto residential houses to provide support for care staff, therapists and gamers. This live streamed platform presentation recounts the remote support provided for residents with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) access to electronic games. It includes a brief background on standard computer-based assistive technology available on TCT residential settings. The presentation showcases the 3-minute video that was produced and disseminated as a resource for use by residential staff; providing tips for set-up, access and how to allow for communication opportunities. We aim to improve communication opportunities for the children and young people by having more frequent and routine access to gaming opportunities. The video resource provides consistent information to ensure each opportunity has a similar set up and implementation which is important for the child and young peoples' learning. Electronic gaming is used in conjunction with personalised information regarding access for each child and young person, stored in their own communication passports. Additionally, gaming provides opportunities for staff to practice communication techniques they are trained on such as allowing time for responses, modelling, turn taking, as well as AAC use around this motivating activity. Strengths and challenges of implementation and carryover will then be discussed. That will be followed up with a brief live tutorial on how the video was made using free software.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Team Work Makes the Dream Work

Thomson, Lois - Author; Peers, Matthew - Co-Author; Greenwood, Dave - Co-Author

Submission ID

63

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

I have been fortunate to interact and work alongside AAC users for many years, both within my professional role and through my involvement with 1Voice and Communication Matters. Working together to support AAC users is something I am very passionate about and some of my relationships with individuals, charities and suppliers go back a very long way! In January 2021 I joined the ATtherapy team as a full time SLT after many years working at both National Star and within the NHS, this was an exciting step in my career journey and has enabled me to fill my days with what I absolutely love, AAC! As part of my role, I am currently supporting Matthew to achieve some accreditation in personal and social development, which has been provided by Creativity in Practice. Matthew is a proficient eye gaze user and a key motivator for him is his avid interest in Smartbox Assistive Technology. Matthew is very inquisitive, has some great ideas and has built relationships with the remote support team over many years, particularly Dave! We at ATtherapy and Smartbox have worked collaboratively to provide an AAC remote support work experience to enable Matthew to gain some insight into skills for work and future employment as well as targeting his therapeutic goals. The work experience to date has been supported remotely secondary to COVID-19. Despite a global pandemic, Smartbox have enabled Matthew to have a virtual office tour, see inside an eye gaze camera, develop and program personalised grid sets, learn further remote support and access skills as well as liaise with other teams within their organisation. This opportunity has demonstrated solidarity and professionalism in supporting AAC users. The sessions are currently ongoing, so we just can't wait to share the full experience with you at the conference!

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

ATtherapy & Smartbox

The CALL Scotland Wheel - iPad Apps for Complex Communication Support Needs: AAC – Rationale and Review

McNeill, Gillian - Author

Submission ID

75

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This popular iPad App Wheel from CALL Scotland was first published in May 2014 and provides a categorised guide to iPad Apps for individuals with complex communication support needs, who may benefit from having access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). It is used by many professionals and others supporting AAC within the UK, as well as internationally, and has proved a valuable tool to assist with identifying and selecting key AAC Apps from the large number available, and feature matching to AAC users' needs. The focus of this presentation is to provide an overview of the range of AAC Apps in the Wheel, provide information on the recent review and update, and discuss factors for future versions. There will include:

- a walk-through of the different sections of the Wheel, covering the categories and feature descriptors used to present and organise the Apps
- a description of the version 2021 update and methods employed for critical appraisal of Apps for inclusion
- an opportunity to explore information for including in further updates, such as approaches to App categories and highlighting of App features

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

The Collaborative Development of a Message Banking Toolkit

Fitzsimons, Ciara - Author; Doyle, Lesley - Co-Author

Submission ID

15

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This presentation will discuss the collaborative, cross-sectoral approach used to create the Irish Message Banking Toolkit. Message and voice banking are recognised as valuable interventions for people with progressive conditions as part of their overall AAC support. Within the Irish system, clients often receive support around these processes from community-based teams, hospital-based teams, as well as specialist Assistive Technology services. We will discuss the clinical challenges within the Irish context, and discuss the collaborative service delivery initiative that we engaged in to address these issues. We will present the results of a collaborative project between our organisations, with the assistance of Trinity College Dublin and Research Motor Neurone, to create a pathway that can be shared among all stakeholders, providing a comprehensive set of resources for use by clients and their therapy teams to support decision-making, as well as practical guidance through the process. Attendees will be guided through the toolkit documents, which have been endorsed by the Irish Speech & Language Therapy Association, and are free to access online.

References (Optional)

Doyle, L., Fitzsimons, C., Jagoe, C., & Barrow, R., (2020) The Irish Message Banking Toolkit, Research Motor Neurone, Dublin

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

The development of voice and message banking options - where are we now?

Hollis, Matthew - Author

Submission ID

23

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The ability to create a synthetic version of your own voice (voice banking) has existed for many years now, but it has only been in recent years that options have increased and a competitive market has appeared. Similarly the ability to record and save your own messages (message banking) has been possible for some time, but how straightforward or appealing is it to do this now? This presentation will look at how voice banking has developed and what the current options are, and also highlight ways to message bank and look towards how options for this could be improved. Voice banking is now well established and exists as common knowledge for many speech and language therapists, however message banking is more complicated to offer due to complexities with file format and integration within AAC, and is often the 'forgotten' cousin to voice banking. This presentation will therefore also act as a starting point to discussion on how the ability to carry out message banking could be simplified and available to all.

References (Optional)

Voice banking for people living with motor neurone disease: Views and expectations Richard Cave and Steven Bloch, 2020

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

The Impact of using Symbols in Adapted Materials on Literacy Development for Learners with Severe Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs

Voizey, Tina - Author; Stevens, Rachel - Author; Ebbage Taylor, Meaghan - Author

Submission ID

41

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Students with severe learning disabilities (SLD) and complex communication needs (CCN) often face barriers to literacy learning which can be difficult to overcome and as such has resulted in a significant disparity of literacy levels for this cohort in comparison to their non-disabled peers. Typically developing children spend years exploring, experiencing, and interacting with materials that foster awareness and understanding of letters, words, sounds, and print before they enter formal literacy instruction. Accessing print-rich materials with little to no support in-home and preschool settings from board books to toys, apps to Youtube videos. Due to sensory, physical, and/or cognitive impairment, those with SLD and CCN often need considerable intervention to provide them with the same foundational experience. As learning typically happens at a slower rate, emergent literacy behaviours and experiences need to be offered and taught well beyond preschool years. Therefore, educators must provide rich, diverse, and daily opportunities to access print and language-rich activities and materials regardless of a student's age. The practice of adding symbols above connected text within adapted books, worksheets, and informational material has been utilised by many professionals with the good intention of providing access to text that is believed a student could not read otherwise. In this session, we will discuss how this creates an unintended barrier to the opportunity of experiencing and interacting with letters, words and print. We will share the findings from research that provide evidence supporting this idea. Lastly, we will present practical solutions of how symbols can and should be used as well as suggestions for providing opportunity and access to text to help build a strong foundational basis for future literacy learning.

References (Optional)

Sheldon, E. & Erickson, K. (2020) Emergent Literacy Instruction for Students with Significant Disabilities in the Regular Classroom, Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits, 14, 135-160 https://www.atia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ATOB-V14-A9-SheldonErickson.pdf

Erikson, K., Hatch, P., & Clendon, S. (2010). Literacy, assistive technology, and students with significant disabilities. Focus on Exceptional Children, 42,5, 1-17. http://my-ecoach.com/online/resources/3916/Literacy,_Assistive_Technology_and_Students_with_Disabilities.pdf

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

The Importance of Literacy Education for All

Giles, Sarah - Author; Bryan, Chantal - Co-Author; Bryan, Jonathan - Co-Author

Submission ID

7

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Teach Us Too believe that good literacy education underpins effective independent communication for AAC users. The teaching of reading, spelling and writing even in the earliest stages, enables AAC users the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings independently, enhancing quality of life and inclusion in society. Literacy skills are fundamental in accessing the wider curriculum, lifelong learning and employment opportunities as well as them having widely recognised benefits to mental health. Encouraging professionals to see and teach beyond labels: assuming competence and expecting progress, is at the heart of the work of Teach Us Too. Good quality literacy education adapted to suit the requirements of the recipient but taught with ambition and high expectations feed into pupils' self-belief and encourage the development of a growth mindset. Our practical and experience led presentation offers the opportunity to hear the first-hand experience of Jonathan Bryan, the charity's founder. An AAC user labelled as having Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities, Jonathan established Teach Us Too to work towards a system where all children are taught to read and write, regardless of their educational labels. He sees himself as a voice for the voiceless and works tirelessly to promote the importance of this message as widely as possible.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

The Unspoken Voices Project: What are the experiences and expectations of people who have been referred to AAC services?

Broomfield, Katherine - Author; Sage, Karen - Co-Author; James, Deborah - Co-Author; Jones, Georgina - Co-Author; Judge, Simon - Co-Author

Submission ID

74

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The Unspoken Voices Project is about learning with and from people who use AAC about their experiences of getting and communicating with AAC devices. The aim of this research project is to identify the important outcomes from AAC from the perspective of the people who use it by understanding more about the journey that they take to get a device. The results will inform the development of a patient-reported outcome measure (PROM). A PROM is a clinical tool that can be used for assessment, evaluation and to support dialogue between clinicians and citizens. PROM development requires careful consideration of the items that should be measured to evaluate products and services. There is currently no single PROM for AAC (Broomfield et al., 2019) and no consistently defined way to understand what success looks like in terms of using AAC (Baxter et al., 2012). During this project, data has been collected from 5 people who have been referred to a regional specialist assessment service at 5 separate time points during their AAC journey: 1) before and 2) after assessment, 3) after receiving AAC, and then again at 4) 6 months and 5) 12 months follow-up. Data have been analysed with close attention to the way in which multiple modes of expression, and from different agents, converge to generate voice during interactions with people who have communication difficulties. Themes have been synthesised to represent some of the factors that influence people's experience of getting AAC, what supports and inhibits their journey, and how their expectations change over time. During this presentation, I intend to share some preliminary results from this longitudinal cohort study and discuss their implications for PROM development and clinical practice.

References (Optional)

Broomfield, K., Harrop, D., Judge, S., Jones, G., & Sage, K. (2019). Appraising the quality of tools used to record patient-reported outcomes in users of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC): A systematic review. Quality of Life Research, 28, 2669-2683
Baxter, S., Enderby, P., Evans, P., and Judge, S. (2012) Barriers and Facilitators to the Use of High-Technology Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices: A Systematic Review and Qualitative Synthesis: AAC Barriers and Facilitators Review. International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders 47(2): 115–129.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

The Words and Work of Matt Gopsill

Gopsill, Matthew - Author

Submission ID

112

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

The patient public voice on the NHS AAC services board and a poet with a communication aid. An insight on what a person can accomplish with the right equipment and the attitude to show everyone his talents.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Therapy Outcome Measures: A deep dive into the cases where outcomes could have been improved

Styles, Vicky - Author; Martin, Catherine - Co-Author

Submission ID

80

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This paper is presented on behalf of the National AAC Outcomes working party and follows on from previous poster presentations that have been delivered at the CM conference. The session will give a brief overview of the Therapy Outcome Measures (1) tools which all specialised services now use to record their outcome measure data; how this data is exported to a national secure data based (ROOT) housed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) and an overview of the advantages of pooling national outcome data. Specialised services have now been recoding outcome data for a number of years and consequently a data set has evolved that can be used to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the outcomes specialised services are achieving. As well as understanding where interventions have been successful it is important to review the data which shows where clinical improvements can be made for the population we are commissioned to support. This session will focus on a review of the less favourable outcomes that were recorded. Themes will be identified from the data set which can be used to improve future AAC interventions .

References (Optional)

1. Therapy Outcome Measure user guide - Pamela Enderby and Alexandra John (2019) J and R Press

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

This Is Me – My Eye Gaze Journey

Larkin, Kellie - Author; Larkin, James - Co-Author

Submission ID

114

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Hello, my name is Kellie Larkin, I will turn 21 in October. I live in Northern Ireland. I was born with quadriplegic cerebral palsy and non verbal but with preserved intellect. From an early age I realised that communicating and others understanding me was a major issue. At 6 years of age I started my journey with assistive technology. In 2007 I gave my first presentation to the Sure Start Wraparound Stakeholder Forum. Through Barnardo's I got involved in research projects, receiving recognition from Queens' University Belfast in 2015. Last year I was humbled to win the Barnardo's Young Achiever of the Year Award for Scotland & N. Ireland. In my video I give an insight into how my marriage to eye gaze technology opened not just doors but the world. I will outline how Covid presented many challenges but also opportunities which I made the most off. I will do this through my Smart Pad Eye Gaze Computer which has enabled me to put across what I think and feel in my own words. I will tell my story in my own words and hope that this will give hope to the many others that are either born with a disability that presents an obstacle to effective two-way communication, but also to those who acquire a similar disability through life. I will touch on my concerns for the future, with a few suggestions of the way forward. As laughter is the best medicine, please do not expect this to be a serious presentation full of doom and gloom. I am a positive person and hope that this encourages others, if not to overcome disability but to minimise its impact and allow an inclusive life. Always look on the bright side of life is my motto.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Through the Teletherapy Looking Glass

Rabe, Heidi - Author

Submission ID

67

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

We cannot go back to yesterday because the world is different today. That includes therapy service delivery. Teletherapy is here to stay and can be an effective model of service delivery. Like in-person therapy, one model of therapy does not work for everyone. Guidance on how to determine an appropriate teletherapy model for a variety of clients/students will be offered based on their needs and preferences, parent preferences, the involvement of others important to the AAC user, and the technology available. We will take peeks at what some AAC teletherapy sessions look like in real life, including supporting literacy development remotely. We will also take a look at some teletherapy "fails". Throughout the presentation, you will see AAC teletherapy through this clinician's looking glass. By the end of this session, participants will be able to describe different models of teletherapy and identify changes that they may be able to make to support those who use AAC via teletherapy.

References (Optional)

ASHA practice portal: https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/telepractice/
Cason & Cohn (2014). Telepractice: An Overview and Best Practice. Perspectives on AAC. Vol 23, Issue 1. Retrieved from: https://pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/aac23.1.4

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

To explore how AAC experts (Professionals and Users), staff in residential settings, and experienced trainers have influenced the development of the 'AAC IS MY VOICE' training course

Martindale, Alysia - Author

Submission ID

19

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) is an essential tool to overcome communication challenges for people with complex communication needs. Within the previous research the voices of AAC users has been limited, yet it is fundamental to development of high-quality evidence- based practice to ensure that everyone's voices are included (1,2). This is the first stage of a two-stage mixed methods project, The overall intention is to verify and test a training offer. The first stage, covered by this presentation, explores how the views and opinions of AAC experts (Professionals and Users), staff in residential settings, and experienced trainers have aided the development of the 'AAC IS MY VOICE' training course. Training for communication partners is required as research has identified that they struggle to provide opportunities for communication (3). Online training has developed over the years, especially during the pandemic, but there is limited research as to its effectiveness (4). This project explores the development of the 'AAC IS MY VOICE' online training course which aims to support communication partners knowledge and an understanding of the value of AAC to people who use it, and increasing their confidence to implement AAC strategies. This presentation will detail the methodology used and the results that show how the voices across the AAC community influenced the final online training programme.

References (Optional)

1: Light, J., & McNaughton, D. (2012). The changing face of augmentative and alternative communication: Past, present, and future challenges, 28:4, 197-204, DOI: 10.3109/07434618.2012.737024.
2: Midtlin, H.S., Næss, K.A.B., Taxt, T. and Karlsen, A.V. (2015) What communication strategies do AAC users want their communication partners to use? A preliminary study. Disability and rehabilitation, 37(14), pp.1260-1267.
3: Carpiac-Claver, M.L. and Levy-Storms, L. (2007) In a manner of speaking: Communication between nurse aides and older adults in long-term care settings. Health communication, 22(1), pp.59-67.
4: McCoy, A. and McNaughton, D. (2020) Effects of Online Training on Educators'

Knowledge and Use of System of Least Prompts to Support Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Journal of Behavioral Education, pp.1-31.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

To Zoom and beyond! Insights from AAC users who conducted training for students and professionals via video conferencing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bryan, Jonathan - Co-Author; Grant, Sylvia - Co-Author; MacLugash, Tina - Co-Author; McBride, Karen - Co-Author; McGregor, Alan - Co-Author; McKenzie, Eoghan - Co-Author; Stark, Darryal - Co-Author; Tavendale, Amy - Co-Author; Williams, Georgie - Co-Author

Submission ID

62

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

The Straight Talking Group is an expert user group of individuals using AAC. For many years, the group has met fortnightly at The University of Dundee, working with researchers to evaluate and develop AAC technology. They also support teaching activities in the School of Science and Engineering and the wider university. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, the group could no longer meet in person and, with the support of university staff to overcome some initial barriers, took steps to meet via the online video conferencing software, Zoom. Meeting online has not only allowed group members to stay in touch from a social perspective and enabled members to join from further afield, but it has allowed the group to continue their important contributions into teaching across the university. This included Q & A sessions with student doctors, sharing experiences and best practice of how to support and interact with patients who use AAC. Group members rotated between student breakout rooms to enable more in-depth and efficient discussions with individuals and the sessions were very well received. As the group became more comfortable and confident with online teaching experiences, further opportunities presented and the group conducted a session with teachers from a local specialist school, feeding back vital insights about their experiences from their school days. Within this presentation, members of the Straight Talking Group will share their experiences of overcoming barriers to access online video conferencing technologies and the impact of using this software during the pandemic. They will also discuss their experiences of lockdown in addition to reflecting on their remote teaching experiences. Finally, the group will provide hints and tips for communicating effectively online with someone who uses AAC.

References (Optional)

Straight Talking Group, University of Dundee - https://aac.dundee.ac.uk/stg/

Level
General Session

Age Group
All Ages

Top Five Tips, Techniques, Tools, & Tales!

Musselwhite, Caroline - Author

Submission ID

115

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This fast-paced presentation will offer a review of five 'Big Ideas' for supporting individuals who use AAC, based on 45+ years of experience working with individuals who use AAC in homes, communities, schools, and clinics. These 'Big Ideas' include:
• More Is More: Everyone deserves a robust vocabulary, including core words, personal words, and the alphabet.
• Modeling Matters: We must find ways to support modeling across partners, places, and times, making it easy through strategies such as 'Strive for Five.'
• Emergent Literacy Rocks: All people (and I mean ALL) must have access to a literacy plan that is comprehensive, engaging, and age-respectful.
• Social Scripts Score: For beginning communicators, sharing complex stories can be challenging. Social scripts can offer 'quick success' while they are learning to navigate AAC systems.
• Explicit Instruction – Effective, Efficient, Engaging: Most individuals who use AAC will need explicit instruction along with modeling. Let's make the intervention be successful and fun!

References (Optional)

Creech, R. (1992). Reflections from a Unicorn. Copyright by Richard. D. Creech.
Erickson, K. & Koppenhaver, D. (2020). Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write. Baltimore, MD. Paul H. Brookes.
Musselwhite, C. (2020). Social Scripts and Literacy. http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/.
Musselwhite, C. (2020b). AAC: Building in Generalization: Rehearse, Practice, Model – GO! A webinar for XCeptionalED. https://xceptionaled.com/course/28/aac-i%C2%BF%C2%BD-building-in-generalization-rehearse-practice-model-i%C2%BF%C2%BD-go
Musselwhite, C. & Burkhart, L. (2001). Can We Chat: Co-Planned, Sequenced Social Scripts. www.teacherspayteachers.com.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Totally Locked in Syndrome – what is it, why do we need to know about it and what options are there for our patients?

Foy, Catherine - Author

Submission ID

53

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

As an NHS-EI specialist AAC hub we see patients with complex physical needs who require access to communication. One such group of patients are those with locked in syndrome. Locked-in syndrome is a rare neurological disorder where patients experience complete paralysis of voluntary muscles, except for those that control their eyes. These patients are conscious and can think and reason, but are unable to speak or move. We also see patients who present as almost locked in but have flickers of movement in another voluntary muscle. The majority of these patients, where able, use eye gaze as an access method to use communication software and include patients with a range of different conditions, both stable and neurodegenerative. Over the past few years we are starting to see that some patients with progressive conditions are now being invasively ventilated, as their respiratory muscles become further affected meaning non-invasive ventilation no longer meets their needs. For patients with neurodegenerative conditions invasive ventilation does not stop disease progression from affecting their last vestiges of voluntary muscles control. Eventually these patients can develop a rarer condition termed totally locked in syndrome, where the muscles that control eye movements are also paralysed. Literature on this topic is mostly from Japan where ventilation of patients with progressive conditions is more common. We decided to review the literature and access options for patients with totally locked in syndrome as it is becoming increasing likely that some of our patients will progress to a point where their eye function is no longer adequate to access eye gaze technology. This presentation will discuss our findings and seek discussion around options that other clinicians are aware and which they are using.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

Adult

Use of Eye-Gaze Technology for Children with Cerebral Palsy - Impact of Functional Vision

Griffiths, Tom - Author; Clarke, Mike - Co-Author; Swettenham, John - Co-Author

Submission ID

70

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Children with cerebral palsy (CP) may be considered candidates for the use of eye-gaze technology to access a computer or AAC device. However, little research exists to support clinicians in their decision-making, or to identify skills that may impact on children's performance and outcomes with the technology (Karlsson et al., 2021). Children with CP often have difficulty with the use of functional vision – a term which describes how an individual makes use of their vision and how they function in vision-related activities such as eye-pointing, choice-making and control of technology (Colenbrander, 2010; Sargent, Clarke, Price, Griffiths, & Swettenham, 2013). The group of "functional gaze control skills" that underpin functional vision - including fixation and gaze switching - are similar to those needed for purposeful control of an eye-gaze system. This presentation will report on the author's final PhD work, aspects of which have presented at several previous CM conferences. The session will discuss the definition and assessment of functional vision, before presenting the results of a study of children conducted with cerebral palsy (n = 9). The study uses a small-scale cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between functional vision skills and performance with eye-gaze technology, using a behavioural measure of functional vision ability and a cause-and-effect game on an eye-gaze system. The work described also considers the potential contributions of developmental age, of practice and previous experience and of explicit teaching and instruction on children's performance. The performance of the group will be compared to the performance of a similar group of typically developing children on the same eye-gaze task. Conclusions from this work will underline the importance of assessing the functional vision skills of children with CP when thinking about the introduction of eye-gaze technology.

References (Optional)

Colenbrander, A. (2010). Assessment of functional vision and its rehabilitation: Review Article. Acta Ophthalmologica, 88(2), 163–173. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-3768.2009.01670.x

Karlsson, P., Griffiths, T., Clarke, M. T., Monbaliu, E., Himmelmann, K., Bekteshi, S., … Wallen, M. (2021). Stakeholder consensus for decision making in eye-gaze control technology for children, adolescents and adults with cerebral palsy service provision: findings from a Delphi study. BMC Neurology, 21(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12883-021-02077-z

Sargent, J., Clarke, M., Price, K., Griffiths, T., & Swettenham, J. (2013). Use of eye-pointing by children with cerebral palsy: what are we looking at? International Journal of Language &

Communication Disorders / Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists, 48(5), 477–485. https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12026

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Using and Supporting High-Tech AAC - We asked more than 500 people and they say...

Street, Mark - Author

Submission ID

6

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Over the last 18 months I have been presenting online webinars to help support individuals who are supporting users of high-Tech AAC. During this time, I have been polling attendees with approximately 10 questions based around their use of high-tech AAC, their expectations and the support they receive. This presentation is an opportunity to present the findings as well as discuss how we can overcome some of the issues discovered and shared. High-Tech AAC is so much more readily available and better funded by NHS England, but those supporting it need input, guidance, and support to ensure better outcome measures. To gather this evidence, I have polled more than 500 people, asked 14 questions and this will form the basis of my presentation. I am excited to share this opportunity as well as share some ideas that have been welcomed online by many people over the last 18 months of presenting live webinars.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

I work for Liberator

Using flex sensors as assistive technology for AAC

Oppenheim, Matthew - Author

Submission ID

68

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Flex sensors are used in several game controllers to enable hand and finger movements to control game software. This project explores extending the use of this technology to enable users of AAC to interact with their communication software through bending movements. The intended users are those who find existing switch solutions unsuitable. The flex sensor is a thin strip of plastic whose electrical characteristics change as it is bent. This change can be measured and amplified using cheap off-the-shelf battery-powered hardware. The flex sensor is attached to the participant using a finger bandage or other suitable method. When an adjustable threshold of bend is exceeded, a wireless signal is sent to a second hardware unit which is attached to the communication device. This unit is configured to act as a switch. The sensitivity of the system can be adjusted to cater for a range of motion. The flex sensor can be worn along a finger, over a wrist or across another joint. Testing and preliminary assessment of a prototype system with the target user group is scheduled for Summer. Of course, the ongoing pandemic may further delay testing.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Virtual issues of AAC equipment to families - a new way and a better way?

Thole, Michelle - Author

Submission ID

42

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Children receiving high tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in Wales have typically done so whilst at school, with the family and other stakeholders attending the appointment there. The device would be issued, and training provided around its use along with other training in modelling and core vocabulary. At the end of the appointment, typically the device would be taken by the class teacher and would then travel home at the end of the day. Historically, it has been a challenge to support AAC use at home due to families existing strength in communicating with the user already, confidence around using the equipment and the ability to recognise communication opportunities. At the start of the National lockdown in March 2020, particularly with school closures and restrictions on home visits, the practice of supplying equipment via school environments and face to face had to change if we were to continue successfully issuing devices. Following discussion with Local Speech and Language Therapists and waiting families, it was decided to courier equipment to homes and then meet virtually 2-3 days post receipt of the device to deliver training and support to home. Since this process has taken place, there has been a perceived benefit observed for the communication partners at home around their confidence levels and ownership of the equipment and its use. The experiences, observations, and perceived outcomes of this process from a professional's perspective along with a change to ongoing practice and the next steps will be discussed.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

Voice banking: why do people living with motor neurone disease choose to voice bank and what do they expect from it?

Cave, Richard - Author

Submission ID

35

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

More than 80% of people living with MND (plwMND) develop difficulties with their speech, affecting communication, self-identity and quality of life. Most plwMND eventually use an augmentative and alternative communication device (AAC) to communicate. Some AAC devices provide a synthesized voice for speech, however these voices are often viewed as impersonal and a factor in AAC acceptance. Voice banking creates an approximation of the person's own voice that can be used in AAC and is argued to go some way to preserve a person's identity when natural voice is lost, but there has been little supporting research. This research is the first study of its kind to examine the considerations for decision making around voice banking for plwMND. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken and thematic analysis was used to provide a qualitative analysis of the data. Twelve plwMND were interviewed with nine significant others. Nine participants had decided to bank their voice and three decided not to. The data suggest 'preserving identity' is the overarching motivation in decision making. However, few showed an awareness of how a voice bank is used in AAC, and how communication using AAC is significantly different to natural speech. Professionals have a role to provide plwMND with more information about voice banking in the wider context of using AAC for communication. It may be that the process of voice banking itself is seen as a positive act for plwMND. Further research with associated professionals and stakeholders is indicated.

References (Optional)

Cave, Richard, and Bloch, Steven. "Voice Banking for People Living with Motor Neurone Disease: Views and Expectations." International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders 56.1 (2021): 116-29. Web.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

What's next? Development of a smartphone visual planner designed for ease of use by adults with intellectual disabilities and autism

Asim, Aadil - Co-Author; Whittles, Dearbhail - Co-Author; Stewart, Nicola - Co-Author; Brophy-Arnott, Bernadette - Co-Author; Arnott, John - Co-Author

Submission ID

51

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Visual planners or schedules are examples of AAC used to support understanding (Beukelman & Light, 2020). These AAC systems are used by people who have difficulties with comprehension, caused by conditions such as autism or intellectual disability. The planners enable users to comprehend their next steps by depicting to them visual information about their activities at an appropriate language level. This increases comprehension and reduces anxiety and so helps users to participate in the activities they are offered. Such planners can be physical schedules for users to engage with; they can also be realised in computer-based or mobile applications which users can view and interpret and carers can modify. AAC symbols, images and text can be used in the user interface, which must be designed for simplicity and clarity in order to make it accessible and comprehensible. Representation of tasks and activities on the planner should aim to reduce the cognitive and language processing required of the user. Present day visual planners are often too complex for this AAC user group. A smartphone app has been developed as a visual planner application for use by adults with complex difficulties, particularly intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder. The design of the planner takes into account the cognitive needs of this group of users, addressing limitations which visual planners often exhibit in relation to this group. The user interface has been developed to match the abilities of the users and expectations of their carers. The resulting display enables the user to focus attention on key elements on the screen, making it easier for them to understand what activity should happen next. Outcomes from trial with adults with intellectual disabilities and autism have supported the adopted design approach and encourage further investigation and development in this area.

References (Optional)

Beukelman, D.R. & Light, J.C. (2020). Augmentative & Alternative Communication: Supporting children and adults with complex communication needs. Edition 5. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. Chapter 10, pp.360-364.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Poster Abstracts

‘I think good voice and you understand it’ Communication aid users’ perspective on aided communication attributes

Flett, Abbigale - Author; Murray, Janice - Co-Author; Lynch, Yvonne - Co-Author; Webb, Edward - Co-Author; Moulam, Liz - Co-Author; Meredith, Stuart - Co-Author; Whittle, Helen - Co-Author; Randall, Nicole - Co-Author; Goldbart, Julie - Co-Author; Judge, Simon - Co-Author

Submission ID

88

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Background: High-tech communication aids can have a significant impact on the health and quality of life of children and young people who have little or no intelligible speech. Successful communication aid recommendation can positively impact the child’s communication and language and social development. Aided communication users are often marginally involved in the decision-making process, despite its proven importance for successful communication aid recommendation. Currently, there is little understanding about what children and young people find important during the decision-making process. Aims: This study aims to explore communication aid users’ perspective on communication aid attributes. Method: Eight children and young adults (five males and three females) who had little or no intelligible speech and were between the ages of four to thirty-six participated in semi-structured interviews. Three participants took part in the interviews using their aided communication devices, the other five participated used Talking Mats. Conclusion: A mixed method approach was used to analyse the data from the interviews. A qualitative framework analysis was first utilised to thematically organise the dataset. A quantitative type/token ratio analysis was then applied to calculate the number of occurrences of each theme in the data. Findings suggest that aided communication users may consider hardware aesthetic, reliability, size and software consistency and intuitiveness of design to be important as these features can be a barrier or facilitator, depending on the device. Further findings suggest users of aided communication consider software ease of editing to have greater importance than software vocabulary due to a preference of programming one’s own vocabulary. What this study contributes: This study gives insight into the perspectives of children and young people with little or no intelligible speech regarding their aided communication device. It provides data to suggest which communication aid attributes users may perceive as important and their views on these attributes.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Exploring the views of Cypriot professionals and caregivers on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems acceptance, rejection or abandonment

Pampoulou, Eliada - Author; Loizou, Maria - Co-Author; Efthymiou, Georgia - Co-Author; Gregoriou, Marianna - Co-Author

Submission ID

49

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The technological advancement in recent years has provided people with complex communication needs with a variety of options in terms of high-tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems. Despite this advancement, the existing literature shows that some people reject or abandon these AAC systems. The aim of the current study was to explore the factors relating to the acceptance, rejection or abandonment of AAC systems. A qualitative approach was followed and data were collected via semi-structured interviews, which were then thematically analysed. The participants were identified via purposively sampling. The participants were six speech and language therapists working with adults with acquired communication disorders and four caregivers (two spouses and two sisters) of people with acquired neurological disorders. The main factors mentioned were person-centred, family ones and support provided by experts. One of the key factors leading to AAC system acceptance would appear to be training and ongoing support provided to both end-users and their families. More factors contributing to AAC system acceptance are the provision of an AAC system tailored to the needs and skills of the end-user, the ease of use, and its adaptability to different communication environments. The cost of AAC systems can lead to their rejection. Personal factors, such as the motivation of individuals for successful communication and continuous family support were shown to be vital for successful AAC system acceptance. In future studies, the involvement of end-users is recommended in order to paint a clearer picture of the factors that contribute to the acceptance, rejection or abandonment of AAC systems. The insights gained will need to be disseminated to all appropriate stakeholders responsible for the development and promotion of the AAC field.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Adult

Graphic symbol preferences of adults with acquired communication disorders

Pampoulou, Eliada - Author; Leonidou, Natalie - Co-Author

Submission ID

50

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) aims to enhance the communication of people with limited or no functional speech. One way that contributes to the effective communication of these people, is by using the various types of graphic symbols, such as objects, photographs, pictures, Makaton and Widgit symbols. Despite the fact that there are dozens of available graphic symbols there is scant research focusing on the type of symbols that people with complex communication needs prefer to use for communication purposes. The aim of the current study was to investigate the preferences of adults with acquired communication disorders in relation to the various collections of graphic symbols. Data collection was conducted through online and face-to-face interviews which lasted about 30 minutes. Nine adults with acquired communication disorders between the ages of 20 and 70 years participated. The aide memoire included 25 questions focusing on the demographic characteristics, participants' preferences for the different types of graphic symbol and their understanding of the meaning/referent of some of the symbols. Four forms depicting the graphic symbols were used. The findings showed that participants preferred and understood more the coloured symbols. They chose the photographs as the most appropriate symbols for adults and Microsoft Clipart symbols as the most appropriate symbols for children. They also showed a particular preference for Microsoft Clipart symbols compared to the other collections of symbols. In their view, the symbols they would use as their only means of communication were the Microsoft Clipart symbols, the Talking Mats symbols and the PartciPics symbols. These findings from this pilot study is important as can provide practitioners with an understanding of the types of symbols that people with acquired communication disorders prefer to use for communication purposes.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

iPad...or not to iPad? Has there been a change in the AAC landscape?

Dowling, Marianne - Author; Bates, Kim - Co-Author; Addison, Anne - Co-Author; Doherty, Emma - Co-Author

Submission ID

30

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The Augmentative Communication Service (ACS) at the Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) is one of 13 specialised AAC services in England. Our service provides specialist assessment and AAC equipment for children and young people with complex needs under the age of 18 years, who reside in and around the London area. Over the years, we have seen an increase in the number of iPads that our service uses for AAC purposes. In this presentation, we will be taking a closer look at the numbers of iPad used for AAC in our service, explore the reasons behind the numbers, and discuss potential lessons we can learn to help guide our decision making process. We will be discussing the results of a service audit carried out recently, where we compared the number of referrals and the assessment outcomes of the children on our caseload over a number of years. While looking for patterns, we will discuss and explore some factors that have potentially influenced the numbers and outcomes. We will also discuss our experiences in the use of iPads for AAC as a specialist service.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Mentoring Project - a visual update

Elliott, Verity - Author

Submission ID

87

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Communication Matters is in the 3rd year of a 5 year project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The project so far has been really successful with a number of AAC users completing a range of qualifications from Entry Level 3 to Level 1. These include Personal & Social Development, Mentoring and Employability. The funding is for AAC users in England and we have been able to continue our project over the last year via Zoom and Teams and 1-1 support as we adapted our approach; this enabled greater access for our learners as they could work from home or with support from their school/college. We hope to be able to meet for face-to-face delivery when it is safe to do so but we will keep our distance learning as it has proven to be really useful. The learning from the project to date has enabled us to develop a range of visual and adapted resources. We are preparing an animation about Mentoring and also adapting our learning resources that will include symbols. The aim is to offer information and greater accessibility. We still have two more years of funding available and we hope to be able to create more animations, develop our resources and expand the learning opportunities to more AAC users.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Remote consultations – feedback from AAC users and their supporters, and KMCAT Adult team staff.

Bradford, Julie - Author; Overell, Georgina - Co-Author

Submission ID

5

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the KM CAT Adult team commenced remote consultations via video and telephone in April 2020. This was to ensure that service users continued to be seen in a timely way. A pilot project was set up to gather and evaluate data in relation to staff and service users' experiences and perceptions of these remote consultations. The initial goal of the project was that the results would help the service to learn from feedback, to help guide how the service might be delivered moving forward. Electronic surveys were sent out to clients after each consultation, and were also completed by staff from April to the end of September 2020. A total of 11 client and 41 staff responses were returned in this time. The staff questions covered what the consultation was for, what method of connection was used and how easy it was connect and whether any technical issues were experienced and if these were resolved. Data was also gathered to capture whether session goals were met and how the preparation time and session length compared to face to face consultations. The client questions asked if they found it easy to connect to the session, whether the agreed aims were met, and how useful they found the appointment. Clients were also asked whether they would be willing to undertake further remote sessions. This poster discusses the benefits and drawbacks of remote consultations. It highlights key learning points from information gathered from the survey outcomes. It also includes conclusions taken from team discussions, and experiences shared by others through national forums. These were not captured in the survey but deemed relevant for inclusion. Recommendations are made for future practice delivery which draws on this learning.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Exhibitor Abstracts

360° of Mounting and Positioning *(Smile Smart Technology)*

Tennent, Matthew - Author; Ehlert, Uli - Co-Author

Submission ID

105

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

The presentation is demonstrating the position mounting & the mechanical aspects of fitting AAC (Augmentative and alternative communication) products to various products. When fitting a Communication aid mount to any product there needs to be a clear defined plan that is followed by all relevant parties/personnel. The mount needs to be the starting point & this needs to be sturdy & holds well. In cases where there are limited mounting spots this can be problematic so Rehadapt have a service called VMS (Virtual Mounting Service). The video demonstrates that if a mount needs to be fitted that does not fall into the standard fitment category there are additional processes that can be followed to achieve a suitable outcome. The key driving points of this video are the strong desire to make life a little easier for each customer & this is demonstrated by the close relationships built up between both clients & various manufacturers within the supply chain. If a new individualized part is created this is then added to the supplier's portfolio so that it aids other individuals at a later stage. This industry is a continual moving target with new products being built on an ongoing basis so the suppliers need to be forward thinking, communicating well & very adaptable to the changing requirements of the most important person, the end user.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

A tour of Mind Express 5 and the vocabulary page sets available for it. *(Techcess)*

Foulger, Ian - Author

Submission ID

100

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Our Mind Express 5 software helps people with communication disorders to communicate. Even if you have little or no speech at all, with the Mind Express software, you can easily learn to communicate using symbols and/or text. Mind Express 5 has absorbed more than 20 years of experience supporting users worldwide. The Mind Express 5 software is used to communicate with partners, friends, children and members of the public. It can also be used well for leisure activities, for example, playing games or watching a movie. Companies, health and education sectors also use Mind Express 5 as a communication and teaching tool for children and adults. You can use Mind Express for e-mails, texting, phone calls and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. This powerful software also allows environmental control to switch the lights on in your home, open a door or turning the volume up on your television, the possibilities are endless. Access Mind Express 5 using a touch screen, a mouse or trackball, a joystick, one or two switches, head tracking and eye gaze. We all have a voice, so using Mind Express gives you that tool! What is new in Mind Express 5? Mind Express 5 builds on the power of Mind Express 4 with a new intuitive design. The focus is on user-friendliness. We've updated Mind Express 4 pagesets, created new apps, games and even more ready-made pagesets including Score, PODD, Amego, Gateway, MaximEyes, Steps to Language and many more. Other new Mind Express 5 features include:

- Change label according to grammar
- A new find word feature
- Multiple dwell times
- Quick fill of cells, handy for quickly populating cells with vocabulary
- Up to 16 scan groups.
- Remote Editing
- Onscreen wizards
- Extensive pre-made pagesets
- Quick Edit
- Video Tutorials

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

AAC in the time of COVID - how our online resources went from strength to strength *(Liberator)*

Gabrielle, Emily - Author

Submission ID

102

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

We have always prided ourselves on the resources we share with others and in recent years have worked to improve how we offer resources online. Thanks to lockdown we pushed ourselves to develop this even further and now have a range of online resources we are really proud of! Join me to find out all the amazing free online support we have available!

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Ace Centre: See What We've Been Up To! *(Ace Centre)*

Fisher, Martin - Author; Voizey, Tina - Author; Team, Ace Centre - Author

Submission ID

91

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Join the Ace Centre to learn about all the developments and services we have to offer from our Services, Partnerships and Ace Centre Learning framework. First, you'll hear from different members of the team who will update you on projects, products and resources we've been working on. From Dasher, Morse Learn and VoiceItt to etran boards, ebooks and alphabet charts, we've been involved in all aspects of AT and AAC. Learn about our Partnership program and how the Ace Centre can support your school or organisation by offering a side-by-side approach to developing staff skills and practice in a guided manner through reflective practice. Lastly, see how the Ace Centre Learning framework offers a wide range of training delivered in various formats providing continuing professional development aimed at building capacity, service development and embedding good practice.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Achieving Independence the Scandinavian Approach *(Abilia)*

Smith, Kat - Author

Submission ID

96

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

We simplify peoples' everyday lives regardless of their need, we want to give people with disabilities the chance to participate and be independent. The founders of our company had their own personal experiences of people close to them who needed help and as true entrepreneurs, they saw solutions where others saw problems. Abilia have been supporting AAC in the UK for nearly 50 years. We help people who have difficulty communicating to make themselves heard, we have devices for communicating via text and voice amplification and our communication aids can be controlled via keyboards or switches. Over years we have established our ECS portfolio and we have a wide range of transmitters and receivers that can be easily installed in your home to allow a user to control functions such as lights, TV, music, changing sitting or lying positions, doors and more. Many of our products are used in workplaces, schools and supported living and care homes Recently we have released to the UK market our range of Cognition solutions, designed to support people who struggle with time perception, starting or planning tasks, memory and problem solving. We support people with Autism, ADHD, Learning Disability, Dementia, Brian Acquired Injury & Stroke. We are often asked what can be the impact of Cognitive disabilities. Memory - difficulties to remember duties and assignments and hard to remember tasks and the correct order. Time perception- hard to know when a task is to be performed, how long the activity is going on Initiative - difficulties starting up activities. Problem solving & communication - hard to take in information, to remember, and to stick to a plan. Our cognition solutions are supporting adults, children & families to increase their independence, improve self-worth, supporting independence at home, in education and at work.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

CALL Scotland – Supporting Learners with Communication Difficulties Access the Curriculum through AAC *(CALL Scotland)*

McNeill, Gillian - Author; Courtney, Joanna - Co-Author

Submission ID

76

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

CALL Scotland, based at the University of Edinburgh, was set up in 1983 as a Research and Development centre, as well as a working Service unit, supporting learners with additional needs to use Assistive Technology, including AAC. Our core funding comes from the Scottish Government, so our work is concentrated mostly in schools in Scotland, although some aspects of the service and many of our resources can be accessed from across the world. We are a team of 10 with a skill mix and backgrounds ranging from teaching and speech and language therapy to assistive technology and engineering, supported by information, ICT and admin staff. In this workshop we will describe our key areas of work, with case studies to illustrate how this works in practice. These areas of work are:

- Strategic Leadership
- Specialist Pupil Assessment and Support
- Professional Learning and Training
- Information and advice
- Equipment Loans and Support
- Knowledge Transfer, Research and Development

We will provide information about practical tools available to download from our websites, including our Symbols for All website symbol resources, and our AAC Scotland website online professional learning materials. We will update on new and ongoing projects and resources.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Child

Grid Pad 10s and Lumin-i: The latest assistive technology from Smartbox *(Smartbox)*

Woollaston, Amanda - Author; Poole, Simon - Co-Author; Church, Hannah - Co-Author

Submission ID

32

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Our latest Grid Pad was developed in collaboration with AAC users, based on years of feedback to help us create a device specifically designed for touch and switch users. Grid Pad 10s is a robust communication aid with a super-fast processor, perfect for communicating quickly and using all the powerful features within Grid. Browse the internet, use social media, listen to music, change the channel on your TV and much more. The second screen means you can display your message on the rear of the device, improving communication in a range of environments and situations. In this talk we will delve into the development process and explore how these features were selected and refined to best support communication and independence. We'll also take a closer look at the second screen and the ways it can help AAC users communicate. For example, it can be used in a noisy room, where the text helps get a message across, or it can be used without audio in a classroom or library. You'll also get to see a brand-new feature now available in Grid, allowing you to show a range of animated Symoji's on the second screen! This gives AAC users a whole new way to communicate by expressing how they are feeling with our Symoji character who conveys a range of emotions from sad, to happy to silly and rude! You will get to see the feature in action and some initial reactions from users. Finally, we will look at alternative access and the many ways Grid Pad 10s suits user access needs.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

How to use Boardmaker 7 to support your learners *(Tobii Dynavox)*

Langley, Alice - Author

Submission ID

93

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Come and learn about Boardmaker7, a complete special education platform that supports learning, communication, access and behaviour needs. Learn how to use Boardmaker to create accessible activities, find pre-made curricula, collect data, and deliver instruction. This session is designed to overview the primary components of Boardmaker 7 and how they can be used together to maximise learning in the classroom, clinic or home environment.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

How we co-designed the alternative access methods in Predictable *(Therapy Box)*

Flahault, Gabrielle - Author

Submission ID

22

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

At Therapy Box, we approach user research with a background in accessibility and inclusive design. Our team has ten years of experience with co-design and undertaking user research. Applying principles and evidence from clinical expertise, we design, develop, and refine the functionalities of our AAC apps to fit our users' needs. In 2020, we release the 6th version of Predictable, our text-to-speech AAC app designed for people who lost the ability to speak. This last version includes some innovative alternative access methods that we invented with our users and experts in the AAC field. This paper is about the design and development process behind Predictable's alternative access methods, and especially about the technology behind Head tracking, Scan & Track, and Gesture speak.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

Adult

Jabbla UK are proud to introduce you to the new Tellus 6. As always with the Tellus series, this latest AAC device exceeds expectations for a high communication device. *(Techcess)*

Foulger, Ian - Author

Submission ID

99

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

The TiltCam at the back of the device has been specially designed for wheelchair use. This means you can change the perspective and zoom so mounting your device no longer determines your photo angle. Collect your best moments and share them via email through Mind Express! The partner display also takes perspective into account allowing a clear visual of the text on the back of the device. Our clever optical bonding technology gives you a razor-sharp view from every angle of the display. We have optimised its dimensions and reduced the weight of the device to 2.45kg. The Tellus 6 is designed for every access method. If you use eye gaze, then the latest Tobii eye tracker technology is seamlessly integrated into the Tellus i6.
Tellus 6 features:

- Keep the best memories with the HD TiltCam.
- Light & powerful device with all day battery life.
- Switch easily between access methods.
- Bright & clear 14? full HD LCD capacitive touch display enhanced for outdoor viewing.
- Latest Tobii Eye IS5 eye tracking (Tellus i6).
- Can be accessed with switches, joystick, touch screen & head trackers.
- Powered by Mind Express 5.
- Fast wake up time from standby.
- Infrared & radio based environmental control.
- Turn on from completely off using switch.
- Integrated mounted plate that works with DaeSSy & Rehadpt
- See through app. When you are you out and about the See Through app allows the person in a wheelchair to see through the Tellus 6 and see what is happening in front of them.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Lancashire Hospital trials AAC app enabling the voiceless to "speak" to doctors, nurses and family members *(Liopa)*

McDaid, Emily - Author; McQuillan, Liam - Author

Submission ID

92

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

In this video. Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust demonstrates the value and benefit of the SRAVI AAC lipreading application. It has been trialling the solution for the past 18 months with patients in ICU / critical care. Watch as patients demonstrate how the app reads their lips and shows the phrase they are mouthing on the phone's screen. The only device needed is a smartphone.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

Liberators new arrival! easyChat Phrases *(Liberator)*

Street, Mark - Author

Submission ID

101

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Liberator Ltd are excited to announce the new arrival of easy chat phrases for chat devices. This webinar will give you a brief overview of the new and exciting vocabulary as well as an overview of the devices it is available on. Available in a 48 location with PCS Symbols, easyChat Phrases has a number of features which make this the ideal vocabulary for those who may benefit from support when building sentences, but who also may benefit from an opportunity to build independent sentences using single words, or develop their skill in this area. For more information about easyChat phrases or to request your free loan please contact Mark Street at Liberator on 07747 016660.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Literacy Resources for All *(Teach AAC)*

Stanton, Tam - Author

Submission ID

97

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

This presentation provides an overview of the products which TEACH AAC supply to support literacy. TEACH AAC is a new company offering low- and high-tech resources to support the teaching of literacy to students who rely on AAC and/or have complex access needs. Literacy Resources for All are a set of low and high-tech activities that can be purchased to support the literacy program that has been devised by teachers at Communication and Learning Enterprises (CandLE), a not-for-profit company supporting students throughout the UK. The resources support 6 levels of a program plus assessment which progresses as follows: The pre-emergent level is supported by our lot-tech sensory to text kit and the emergent level is supported by our Predictable chart and Alternative Pencil. Our assessment kit enables teachers to establish the phonics learning needs and comprehension ability of the student. We also have a range of high-tech programs that are platformed on Grid 3 with one, Phonics for All, also platformed on Mind Express and Clicker 8. It is planned that all of our literacy programs will eventually be available in Mind Express and Clicker 8 as well as Grid 3. This presentation will give an overview of the products we provide to support literacy.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Navigating the challenges of providing AAC in the independent care setting *(Smartbox)*

Woollaston, Amanda - Author; Vacara, Kerry - Co-Author; Roberston, Euan - Co-Author

Submission ID

31

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

The 100 Voices project is a joint initiative between Care Tech and Smartbox aiming to provide 100 people in the care setting with a voice. Throughout 2021, we have worked with 28 Care Tech homes and Schools to provide technology to people who have not previously had the opportunity, may not be eligible for funding and have previously been hard to reach. This session will talk about the project from its inception through to data collection and user stories. This will include challenges, highlights and what we have learned so far. Throughout the project we worked with clinicians from the Care Tech schools and also an Independent Speech and Language Therapist to guide assessment and ensure robust and clinically evidenced decisions were made. We also put an advisory panel in place to provide oversight and the project board included members from both Care Tech and Smartbox teams. By maintaining a person centred focus throughout, both companies had the opportunity to reflect and identify changes to service and provision for people we support. It's widely recognised in the field of AAC that funding a device is purely the first step and that implementation is key to successful adoption and outcomes. Both companies recognised the responsibility for ensuring enduing support even after the project had ended. Against a background of a global pandemic this involved thinking creatively. Drawing on existing frameworks and tools we were able to gather data that is grounded in evidence based clinical practice. We will share initial findings and expected outcomes. If you are an AAC practitioner, Parent or Carer this session will discuss our learning on funding a device for people within a care setting.

References (Optional)

Pragmatics Profile for People who use AAC Martin, S., Small, K., & Stevens, R. (2017).
I-ASC: Identifying Appropriate Symbol Communication, Manchester Metropolitan University, Barnsley Assistive Technology Service, University of Leeds, National Institute for Health Research, https://iasc.mmu.ac.uk/ (2016)
IPAACKS: Informing and Profiling AAC Knowledge and Skills, Scott, J (MBE), NHS Education for Scotland (2014)
Talking Mats, talkingmats.com
Communication Trust WPD
https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/12895/slcn_tools-_workforce-planning_1_.pdf
Augmentative and Alternative Communication for Individuals with Intellectual Disability (Ambady & Sherly, 2018).

Beyond the Anecdote: Examining the need for, and provision of, AAC in the United Kingdom (Enderby, Judge, Creer & John 2013)
Building Capacity in AAC: A person-centred approach to supporting participations by people with complex communication needs (McNaughton, Light, Beukelman, Klein, Nieder & Nazareth 2019)
Raising our sights: Services for Adults with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities (Mansell 2010)
Systematic Review of Methods for Teaching Social and Communicative Behaviour with High-Tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication Modalities (Gilroy, McLeery & Leader 2017)

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

New ultra-easy AAC application for lipreading *(Liopa)*

McDaid, Emily - Author; McQuillan, Liam - Co-Author

Submission ID

26

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

We are Liopa. We've developed SRAVI app to bring a voice to the voiceless. Of the available AAC applications targeted at the voiceless, many are complex, and there's a necessary learning curve. (E.g. eye gaze tracking systems) The problem with complex systems is people need to be relatively well to use them and thus they are of little use in Critical Care environments. SRAVI is "ultra-easy" – here's why:

- Users can be up and running in seconds
- All you need is a smartphone
- You simply aim the camera at the person, and it reads their lips from a defined set of phrases
- They can communicate with family members, doctors and nurses instantly

Many conditions will render patients voiceless – tracheostomies, paralysis or stroke. Some conditions are short-term, others permanent. So far, SRAVI app has been successfully trialled with patients in ICU at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust, and we're expanding to other ICU units across the UK. ICU consultant, Dr Shondipon Laha, said: "This prototype, trialled successfully on our critical care unit, has shown very exciting results." SRAVI communicates basic but vital phrases such as "I need the toilet. I'm thirsty. I'm hungry." It gives people greater control over their situation. Dr Laha went on: "Not being able to speak is very frustrating for the patient and staff. We can deal with patients' needs much more rapidly and the rehabilitation process is much smoother if we can improve communication. SRAVI is absolutely fundamental to the successful treatment of extremely ill patients." SRAVI has helped Nathan Armstrong, from Oswaldtwistle. Nathan said "I love how simple SRAVI is to use. SRAVI enables me to tell people what I need." During this talk, we will explain how SRAVI works, describe who it will help, and give real-life examples from medical care professionals using SRAVI.

References (Optional)

www.sravi.ai https://www.sravi.ai/evidence.html www.liopa.ai

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Phonics for All, Leap to Literacy and Bridge to English. *(Teach AAC)*

Stanton, Tam - Author

Submission ID

98

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

This presentation describes and gives examples from our three signature programs that support literacy development for students who rely on AAC and/or have complex access needs. Phonics for All provides students with voice output access to a variety of phonics approaches including the currently mandated synthetic phonics approach as well as approaches that work well for students who may take longer to acquire phonic knowledge. Leap to Literacy is designed to follow on from Phonics for All and combines vocabulary development with reading, writing, comprehension and speaking and listening skills. Bridge to English adapts the English curriculum so that students who need more opportunities for rehearsal and repetition with variety are able to access the mainstream curriculum for English appropriately. Phonics for All is available in Grid 3, Mind Express, and Clicker 8. Leap to Literacy and Bridge to English is currently available in Grid 3 but is also planned for presentation in Mind Express and Clicker 8. These three programs are designed to work together to give substantial access to literacy using a range of access methods including eye gaze, pressing a switch, and direct access to touch a screen or using a keyboard. The learning theory that underpins the programs and the activities within them will be explained.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

TD Snap: Communicate your way! *(Tobii Dynavox)*

Langley, Alice - Author

Submission ID

94

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Success looks different for everyone so TD Snap offers a suite of eye gaze, touch and switch-enabled pagesets and vocabularies to meet different communication needs and preferences. All TD Snap Page Sets come with a powerful set of tools to help simplify editing and enrich communication. In this session, we will look at the Aphasia pageset, Core First, PODD and the Text pageset whilst considering how they can support a range of AAC users with differing needs.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

TickTock: The Time is Now for Language and Literacy *(Tobii Dynavox)*

Diener, Bethany - Author

Submission ID

56

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Many of us are looking for motivating and real-life approaches for teaching literacy, language, and social skills while our clients and their families are interested in more than communication alone (Narain & Maes, 2020). TikTock, Instagram, and Google Home along with other social media and home automation tools offer unique opportunities which can be tailored to address your client's interests as well as their goals (e.g., sight word recognition, spelling, initiating communication, sentence structure, choosing appropriate communication strategies/tools). From logistical and security considerations to goal writing, join us in harnessing the power of these resources.

References (Optional)

Narain, J., & Maes, P. (2020). Understanding AAC Usage and Needs through a Web Survey with Device Users and Families. 2020 42nd Annual International Conference of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine & Biology Society (EMBC), 3864-3868.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

Voco Chat: A new low cell count symbol vocabulary for people of all ages *(Smartbox)*

Woollaston, Amanda - Author; Clay, Daisy - Co-Author; Kirby, Anita - Co-Author

Submission ID

34

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Hear all about our new symbol vocabulary due to launch later this year. With a low cell count of just 20 cells per grid, this vocabulary is designed to enable users to quickly and efficiently communicate messages, using sentence starters, phrases and dynamic grids. Suitable for individuals with a learning disability and/or highly complex access, who need symbols to communicate, this new vocabulary focuses on all of the many and varied reasons we communicate. Individuals are supported to achieve these using a scaffolded pragmatic approach to language.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Voiceonics 'Phrase' communication aid *(Voiceonics)*

Leppard, Mike - Author

Submission ID

90

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Voiceonics offer high quality communication aids to people with limited or no speech. Our aids are designed for simplicity of operation with very high quality speech. We strive to offer the most innovative designs at the most competitive prices. Voiceonics was founded in 2009 by an enthusiastic engineer with a passion in technology combined with a love of keeping things simple. The latest communication aid 'Phrase' is free of any internet needs. There is no password to enter when turning on, no home screen with the usual collection of apps, no security updates, no privacy worries, no emails, no texts and no google to be tempted by. The 'Phrase' offers an easy to use 7" touch screen keyboard, high quality voices (provided by 'Cereproc') and all at a competitive price. The AAC device is innovative in terms of its cost and simplicity of use. A quick description of the device: The device has a touch screen and voice output. Its standout features are simplicity of use and cost. There is one button to turn it on or off. Unlike an android or Apple device, there are no passwords to enter, no apps to find, no updates to worry about, no email notifications, no security implications / data privacy.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

What's happening at Liberator *(Liberator)*

Street, Mark - Author

Submission ID

103

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

It's fair to say the pandemic has certainly changed the way in which we all work today, however at Liberator we've embraced the opportunity and we have reached so many people with exciting new vocabularies, devices and services and support. This webinar tells you some of the exciting things that have happened at Liberator and it's a great opportunity to have a short update and catch-up. There is so much to talk about and share with you, I hope this short webinar entices you to make contact with us and take advantage of our extensive range of products and services.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages