CM2023

Communication Matters International AAC Conference

10-12 September 2023

University of Leeds

Book of Abstracts

Communication Matters

Contents

Exhibitor sessions are shown in blue.

MONDAY

Keynote: Making with mentors

Pullin, Graham - Author

Submission ID

83

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

As design researchers, we use making – many different kinds of making – as a way of thinking and learning. Sometimes we make prototypes of concepts to try them out with people, as you might expect. At other times we make things that are more provocative: objects that give visibility to a topic that isn't being talked about enough. Other times again, we co-create paper or digital collages that explore issues that may be difficult to put into words. At the moment we are using all three ways of making on a Wellcome Trust-funded humanities-led project with the University of Leeds and other partners, called 'Imagining technologies for Disability futures'. Studio Ordinary at DJCAD, the art school at the University of Dundee, is a group of disabled and non-disabled researchers. We combine design with disability studies, not approaching disability as a 'problem' to be 'solved' but as part of the fabric of everyday lives. We are interested in the ways in which design can reflect people's attitudes towards their own disabilities (or undermine them, if these are not considered!) And also how design might help to change the conversation around disability. We end up forming close working relationships with some disabled co-designers, who we think of as our 'mentors' – a term we take from Colin Portnuff's talk: 'AAC – A User's Perspective'. We realise that 'AAC mentor' has another meaning, but we haven't found a better way of expressing the value we place on the lived experience of our co-researchers. In this talk we will share our making so far on the project, imagining alternative futures for AAC. There will be opportunities to participate in collaging, either at CM or afterwards. And we would still welcome meeting future mentors.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

1.1: Creating meaningful opportunities for AAC users. How does the AT Mentor service benefit the mentors themselves?

Gilmour, Gregor - Co-Author; Beck, Lucy - Co-Author; Shearer, Sarah Jane - Co-Author; Sillars, Sam - Co-Author; Sharples, Andrea - Author

Submission ID

10

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The AT mentor team was set up in 2016 as a means to support mentees on their AAC journey. The service has been a great success and over time it has become apparent that the benefits go beyond those for the mentees but also extend to the mentors themselves. This presentation looks at these benefits to the mentors and describes how not only does the service promote wellbeing for the mentors but also provides meaningful, financial and career opportunities and progression. Bryen et al (2007) reported that only 15% of adults using AAC were actively employed. Furthermore, McNaughton, Light and Groszyk (2001) described the important role that employment plays in personal self-image and quality of life. The AT mentor service aims to overcome some of the barriers to employment in order to address this in addition to providing opportunities for friendship, support, social interactions and confidence building. We will discuss these advantages from all team member's perspectives, look at any barriers to being a member of the mentor team and outline plans for the future.

References (Optional)

Bryen, D. N., Potts, B. B., & Carey, A. C. (2007). So You Want to Work? What Employers Say about Job Skills, Recruitment and Hiring Employees Who Rely on AAC. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 23 (2), 126-139. McNaughton, D., Light, J. & Groszyk, L. (2001). "Don't Give Up": Employment Experiences of Individuals with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Who Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication. AAC Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 17, 179-195.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

1.2: Effective communication strategies for social partners of AAC users

van der Schuit, Margje - Author; Damen, Saskia - Author

Submission ID

16

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Harmonious interactions and a good understanding of each other are the basis of any relationship. The promotion of satisfactory social and communicative interactions is also inherent in the actions of parents, family members, teachers, friends, and support workers of children and adults with multiple disabilities who use AAC. Many social partners, however, indicate a need for knowledge of and support in the communication with their child, sibling, student, friend, or service user. Working on the competencies of social partners can contribute to a sense of competence and reduction of stress for both the AAC user and the social partner. Improving the communicative interactions between the AAC user and the social partner may also provide the AAC user better learning opportunities. In this presentation, we will present specific strategies for communication partners of AAC users with multiple disabilities. In a recent study, we found several effective partner strategies according to parents, support workers, and scientific literature. In addition, we will show how social partners were supported in applying partner strategies during video-feedback interventions, that were developed and tested for their effects at the University of Groningen in collaboration with the Kentalis Academy. Furthermore, we will provide case examples that show how partner strategies improved the communication with AAC users with multiple disabilities. The importance of co-creating interventions with social partners, using their expertise and strengths and their individual needs and circumstances, will also be discussed. We aim to provide the audience with 1) knowledge about effective communication strategies for social partners of AAC users, 2) insights into how we can support partners in applying these strategies, and 3) inspiration by showing how these partner strategies improve the communicative interactions between AAC users and their social partners.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

1.3: Collecting and collating the views of AAC users during decision making.

Murphy-Mann, Saffron - Author; Blackbourn, Philippa - Co-Author

Submission ID

25

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

It's not unusual for young people who use AAC to transition between new classes in their current learning environment or moving to a new learning environment and every transition needs to be carefully planned with key people prepared, so that the move is successful. We have jointly been involved in the passage of some specific students as they have moved between primary, secondary and college environments, which have provided mainstream learning or specialist provision. Not an EHCP meeting, location visit, or transitional appointment has gone by without us completing accessible and bespoke student view questionnaires, as we have considered the AAC user's participation as paramount. This has allowed us to feel confident advocating for them at annual gatherings of opinion. Following on from the lockdown period, when we believe young people have felt even more motivated to transition to ambitious locations for residential placements, as well as to fulfil their educational desires, we have trialled a very successful, thorough, and non-biased method of supporting the young person to independently make and express decisions and preferences. We wish to share with you some of the visual materials we have prepared and then presented to a specific student, as she has gone through a series of visits, a period of comparing and even a 180° change of opinion about the placement that could best meet her future needs.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

1.4: Seven stages of switch development: a child-centred switch curriculum

Thompson, Luke - Author

Submission ID

7

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

For children with complex neuro-disabilities, for whom both communication and movement are very challenging, switch technology is a critical enabler in developing skills that will enable them to reach their full potential. Switches can give children a voice. Our experience shows that existing frameworks and pathways to support and progress children's switch use are not accessible and engaging enough to motivate children to learn, and they are hard for parents and non-specialist practitioners to understand and implement. To address this we have developed the seven stages of switch development. A child-centered switch curriculum targeted directly at the learners and those who support their learning. We completed desk research on existing models as well as researched the academic evidence for switch use. We then developed an initial framework and engaged user research (surveys, focus groups, interviews) throughout to shape and create our model and supporting materials, which includes 7 children's stories of each stage. The presentation will be about how we developed the framework, an introduction to the framework and its tools, and a discussion on how it has been used and future plans for its development.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Child

Details of sponsorship

Communication Consortium / ICAN provided a grant to complete this work

1.5: Vocabulary Selection: An OT and SLT collaborate for efficient, functional and social communication.

Danger, Charlie - Author; Williams, Ruth - Co-Author

Submission ID

28

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This presentation will explore the relationship between access, language and other factors that come into play when using a feature matching approach to recommend vocabularies to people with Cerebral Palsy (CP) and similar neurological conditions. Bruce Baker (2005) identified that if the combined cognitive effort, physical effort, and time taken by an individual to use a communication aid were too great, they would reject it for a simpler (and probably more linguistically limited) approach. It is well known that people with CP often experience grasp, reach, and other motor challenges which can significantly affect their access to augmentative communication. They also typically experience more pain than those without CP (Jahnsen et al, 2004), can fatigue more easily, requiring two to three times more energy to complete some tasks (Van Der Slot et al, 2012), and are very likely to have a Cortical Visual Impairment (Lehman, 2018). The solutions can be complex. For example, switching to larger symbols may support a visual impairment while reducing the physical effort of activating individual cells, but can simultaneously increase the energy required overall to navigate a multi-page vocabulary, increase the cognitive effort in remembering where to find things, and may increase the time required to produce utterances. With this in mind, how do we complete assessments, what considerations do we make in our feature matching process, what compromises are needed, and who is responsible for making these decisions? We draw on published evidence and our experience as an occupational therapist and speech & language therapist who have worked closely together with children and adults for many years. This presentation will include videos of users, example vocabularies, conclusions from a workshop facilitated by the authors at the ISAAC Cancún conference on this topic, and resources for delegates to take away and use.

References (Optional)

Baker, B. (2005). Motivation Formula. Retrieved March 28, 2008, from Assistive Technology Training Online Project (ATTO) web site: http://atto.buffalo.edu/registered/ATBasics/Populations/aac/vocabulary.php Jahnsen, R., Villien, L., Aamodt, G., Stanghelle, J. K., & Holm, I. (2004). Musculoskeletal pain in adults with cerebral palsy compared with the general population. Journal of rehabilitation medicine, 36(2), 78–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/16501970310018305 Lehman, S.S. (2018). Cortical Visual Impairment in the Child with Cerebral Palsy. In: Miller, F., Bachrach, S., Lennon, N., O'Neil, M. (eds) Cerebral Palsy. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50592-3_78-1 Van Der Slot, W. M., Nieuwenhuijsen, C., Van Den Berg-Emons, R. J., Bergen, M. P., Hilberink, S. R., Stam, H. J., & Roebroeck, M. E. (2012). Chronic pain, fatigue, and depressive symptoms in adults with spastic bilateral cerebral palsy. Developmental medicine and child neurology, 54(9), 836–842. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8749.2012.04371.x

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

1.6: Towards a code of practice to support the use of AI (artificial intelligence) in AAC

Slaughter, Rohan - Author; Waller, Annalu - Co-Author; Griffiths, Tom - Co-Author

Submission ID

66

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

As generative AI tools such as ChatGPT become more widely available, the debate around their impact (good and bad) is very much in the public consciousness. There exists some exploratory research into how AI might support the development of AAC systems, including the Standup (Waller A. , et al., 2009) ACE-LP projects (University of Dundee, 2023) led by Prof. Annalu Waller (Waller A. , Scottish AI Summit 2022, 2022) and several projects which look to integrate generative AI into word and sentence prediction functionality (Shen et al., 2022; Valencia et al., 2023). User involvement in design and development of such systems is still at an early stage. The UoD team would like to work with members of the Communication Matters community, including professionals, AAC users and their families to consider the potential benefits of the use of AI in AAC systems, as well as discussing what safeguards may be needed. We wish to understand specific concerns members of the CM community may have. It is acknowledged that there is both great potential for AI to improve communication speed, and there are also real concerns such as user agency, and privacy to address, we hope there will be much to discuss. At this interactive workshop, the UoD team propose to “chair” the session, starting with a brief presentation to support structured discussion through which we can capture the views of those present. Delegates should be aware that the session will be recorded, and a summary of the discussion and its themes will be written up by the UoD team for publication in the Communication Matters journal. We would be particularly keen to hear the views of delegates on whether a code of practice or code of ethics might be needed for those looking to make use of AI in AAC systems.

References (Optional)

Shen, J. et al. (2022) ‘KWickChat: A Multi-Turn Dialogue System for AAC Using Context-Aware Sentence Generation by Bag-of-Keywords’, in 27th International Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces. IUI ’22: 27th International Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces, Helsinki Finland: ACM, pp. 853–867. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1145/3490099.3511145. University of Dundee. (2023, 04 19). ACE-LP: Augmenting Communication Using Environmental Data To Drive Language Prediction. Retrieved from UoD AAC Research Group: Available at: https://aac.dundee.ac.uk/ace-lp/ Waller, A. (2022, 03 30). Scottish AI Summit 2022. Dundee. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PID4Fxjwe7I&ab_channel=ScottishAIAlliance Waller, A., Black, R., O'Mara, D., Pain, H., Richie, G., & Manurung, R. (2009). Evaluating the STANDUP pun generating software with children with cerebral palsy. ACM Transactions on Accessible Computing, 1(3), 16. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1145/1497302.1497306

Waller, A., Black, R., Turner, R., & Reiter, E. (2012). Supporting personal narrative for children with complex communication needs. ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction, 19(2), 15. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1145/2240156.2240163

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

1.7: Use the Internet to Enhance Communication and Literacy Skills with Eye Gaze

Diener, Bethany - Author

Submission ID

22

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Historically, use of alternative access methods was a barrier to surfing the World Wide Web. Improvements in this access in recent years offer opportunities for teachers, therapists, and families to ride the Internet wave to greater communication and literacy skills for those using eye tracking while taking advantage of individuals' interests. Attaining the operational skills to use the Internet via touch often occurs by watching other people and exploring independently. This approach is not typically successful for those using eye tracking because they rarely have a model using eye tracking and may require learning of additional operational skills. Therefore, we will offer a systematic approach to teaching the operational skills needed for independent Internet access with eye gaze (regardless of eye tracking device in use). We will begin with assessing the abilities to perform necessary functions for Internet use (e.g., clicking, scrolling). A suggested order for teaching these skills will be presented based on typical internet use and operational ease, along with specific websites and features to support learning. With the ability to perform basic Internet functions in place, we can turn our attention to using the Internet as a tool for learning. Focusing on communication or literacy goals (e.g., building background knowledge, receptive and expressive vocabulary, sentence formulation and comprehension, sight reading, alphabet knowledge, social participation, initiating interaction), this session will demonstrate using a variety of websites to creatively address goals using case studies.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

I am an employee of Tobii Dynavox and will state this at the beginning of the session.

1.8: Talking to Teachers: Guidance for Speech and Language Therapists working with Teachers to implement better AAC

Doran, Joseph - Author

Submission ID

1

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Speech and Language Therapists frequently report finding it challenging to work effectively with teachers when trying to implement better AAC in classrooms. It sometimes seems like these two professions are speaking different languages! So why is collaboration so difficult, when both parties have the pupils' best interests at heart? Drawing on his own experiences as a special school teacher (who often did not listen to his local Speech Therapists) an Advisory Teacher for the Communication Aid Service East of England, and now an AAC Consultant at Ace Centre North, Joe will do his very best to explain the unique complexities of the teaching profession, how they can become barriers to better AAC, and offer guidance on how Speech and Language Therapists can navigate the anachronisms of the education sector in order to "get through" to teachers more effectively, ensuring better practise for teachers, teaching assistants, and perhaps schools as a whole.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

1.9: What does the Future Hold for the CM Website?

Voizey, Tina - Author

Submission ID

93

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The Communication Matters website is getting an update! This workshop's aim is for the Trustees involved to gather ideas on what is important to members of CM, stakeholders and visitors to the website. We want to know what information and features you'd like to see. Accessibility, awareness raising, signposting to information and the facilitation of networking are some of the topics to be discussed. We will introduce plans for the reorganisation and update of the website, new technologies being investigated to support the improvement of accessibility, as well as systems being put in place to support the way we organise, interact and communicate with our members, attendees at events we host and other interested parties. You will then be asked to join a small break out group to tackle specific topics that interest you. We will finish the session by gathering all the ideas and suggestions made to create a report which will be given to the Board of Trustees and consultants working on the new website. We welcome all with ideas or those who want to advise on plans already being hatched. Please join us to form the future of the CM website!

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

2.1: one a a c users tale of being a recluse ready to listen!

norman, maddy - Author

Submission ID

3

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Hello my name is Maddy , I have found over the last few years been less people to talk to. A a c recluse I have become. I spend my day in front of the TV while trolling the Internet on my I series device whilst my p s w s get on with their day. You can't have a conversation when you are in different room. I rarely go anywhere so I hardly see anyone meaning I miss out on normal day to day interaction with peers. Giving directions to carer's isn't real life interaction. I am now back at day centre one afternoon a week so things are back to where they were pre covid. Although can be vital. What I would like to happen is to have meaningful relationships with people but how can I do this when all I see is professionals. I am 44 not 64, soon 45. I get bored of talking to the exactly the same people day in day out. Do have a small group of friends on Facebook do mean small. The problem is over the past year not had a reliable support team which made communication incredibly difficult esp ecially when they are not interested in anything. Finally I hope that I can get involved with something that is sustainable and challenging, Thank you and enjoy the rest of the conference.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

2.2: When the eye gaze vocab doesn’t fit: Problem solving and practical programming for eye gaze access – a collaboration between SLT and Supplier

Hartley, Claire - Author; Foulger, Ian - Co-Author

Submission ID

67

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

As a therapist working with individuals who require alternative and augmentative communication (AAC), it can be challenging to find appropriate solutions when off-the-shelf page-sets don't match their needs. This presentation shares case studies of two students who use AAC at Treloar School in Hampshire who needed an eye gaze symbol based vocabulary solution that combined their limited access skills (initial eye gaze ability to select 6/8 cells per page) with their greater language abilities. Existing page-sets did not meet these needs, so development of a new language page-set was required, that allowed them to meet their full potential. The collaboration with Jabbla resulted in an innovative 2-step system that significantly expanded the communicative potential of these students. The presentation will highlight the features of the new program, programming tips and tricks, and

the prioritization of what was important for these students. We will also discuss how we plan to further develop their programs in the future. Working closely with the Supplier (Jabbla) on vocabulary development and programming was a critical aspect of this work, and the presentation will explore how maintaining relationships with AAC suppliers (from different companies) allows for creative solutions that ensure students have the appropriate tools to meet their needs. At Treloar's, the therapist has found that effective communication outcomes for students often depend on having the right devices and support.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

Jabbla

2.3: Service User Involvement in a Specialist Assessment and Provision Service

Diver, Danielle - Author; Preece, Jamie - Co-Author; Lee, Andrea - Co-Author

Submission ID

57

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This presentation will describe the processes, benefits and challenges of developing a Service User Representative role within a specialised service. This will be presented by a Service User Representative and an Assistive Technology Specialist SLT who has an additional role of mentoring a Service User Representative. The Barnsley Assistive Technology Team have drawn on user experience for several years for specific projects and AAC user representation, for example on interview panels. The team recently decided to expand this role to include client centred training, lived experience training for professionals, equipment evaluation, university link work, resource development and research collaboration. This presentation will describe the role of the Service User Representative and the joint working relationship with the clinicians in each of these areas. The Service User Representative will discuss how he contributes to the service, particularly the impact on individual clients, and will also reflect on how this has helped to develop his own career. The clinician presenting will discuss the service delivery and management aspects of employing service users and how this differs from managing other employees. This includes

managing the everyday support of the Service User Representatives, implementing reasonable adjustments required and supporting this role within the wider team. The clinician will also describe some of the tasks they have completed for the service and use video to provide an insight into the benefits of the role from a clinical perspective in the form of a client case discussion. The clinician has developed her skills as a workplace mentor, and will describe how she has acknowledged and pursued specific leadership training required for this role. She will discuss ways she has implemented her learning to nurture one Service User Representative's independence and confidence in the workplace and empower them to identify and pursue goals for their professional development.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

2.4: Accessing the curriculum at the earliest opportunity; why we need to embed AAC and curriculum access in preparation for examinations

Baggley, Laura - Author

Submission ID

108

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The AAC Exams Access Working Group have developed an established and well used guidance document for examinations from Key Stage 3 and upwards across England. The document has not only been well received but is being used actively to advocate for complex access arrangements for students using AAC, enabling them to achieve their fullest potential within the education system. The group has now written a separate guidance document to support AAC and access to testing in Key Stages 1 and 2, recognising that access arrangements need to be established at the earliest opportunity and where possible before secondary education. This session will explore the new document for primary-aged settings, the reasoning behind establishing access at a much earlier age and the possibilities for students to access national and other testing in-line with their peers as independently as possible. We will discuss options for accessing key stage 2 SATs examinations, specifically around using AAC equipment and explore the importance of focussing on access to independent learning within the primary classroom. We will also explore how establishing these access methods in the classroom at the earliest opportunity can promote advocacy for

AAC user's independence in their communication and learning, and consider the roles of professionals in securing access arrangements within the classroom and in examinations.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

2.5: A Tale of TOMs and Talking Mats: Comparing the clinician-rated Therapy Outcome Measure (TOM) with the Patient reported outcome measure (PROM) using Talking Mats

Martin, Catherine - Author; Bell, Amy - Co-Author

Submission ID

53

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

AIM: This mixed methods project was a comparison of our Patient Reported Outcome Measure (PROM) with our clinician reported outcome measure TOM-AAC (Therapy Outcome Measure for AAC) for a selection of patients seen by CASEE (Communication Aid Service East of England). From clinical experience we expected a complimentary relationship between the two measures for activity and participation domains.
METHOD: We used the CASEE PROM which has 2 questions designed to compliment the AAC TOM and is completed via Talking Mats. Question 1 represents the ACTIVITY DOMAIN and asks about the different communicative functions? E.g. 'How do you feel you are able to tell people about your needs; share a story; give your opinion? etc. Question 2 represents the PARTICIPATION DOMAIN and asks about the people the person is communicating with? E.g. 'How do you feel about your communication with friends'; carers; your SLT etc.?' We collected data from clinical records. We quantified the qualitative Talking Mats so both measures were quantitative and we could compare.
RESULTS: We explored the comparison of TOMs change scores with Talking Mats change scores to see if patients and clinicians have a similar or different perspective for the outcome achieved.
CONCLUSION: The project enabled the team to have a clearer understanding of the use of these two tools in combination. Through clinical reflection we identified reasons why the scores differed: AAC users and clinicians have different information to use to compare outcomes; clinicians scores are based on a snapshot of a few clinical visits whereas AAC

users can reflect on their whole experience.
KEY BENEFITS:

- Capturing service outcomes alongside patient voice
- Opportunity for clinicians to reflect on outcomes from differing perspectives
- Using a talking mat to gather qualitative information may help clinicians understand outcomes in more depth and better represent the true impact of intervention

References (Optional)

[1] Unswoth CA (2011) Evidence-based practice depends on the routine use of outcome measures. British Journal of Occupational Therapy 74(5)
[2]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 : an international journal of quality of life aspects of treatment, care and rehabilitation, 28(10), 2669–2683. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-019-02228-3
[3] Delvin, N. & Appleby, J. (2010) Getting the most out of PROMs: Putting health outcomes at the heart of NHS decision-making. The Kings Fund, https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/Getting-the-most-out-of-PROMs-Nancy-Devlin-John-Appleby-Kings-Fund-March-2010.pdf. Accessed 30th October 2020.
[4] Enderby P & John A (2015) Therapy Outcome Measures for Rehabilitation Professionals: 3rd Edition. Guildford: J & R Press
[5] Talking Mats© http://www.talkingmats.com/

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

2.6: Working Together - benefits and barriers to independent AAC services working with the NHS

Sharples, Andrea - Author; Murphy Mann, Saff - Co-Author; Hazell, Gillian - Co-Author; King, Judy - Co-Author

Submission ID

52

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Independent therapy, education and technology services are an increasing sector within the AAC community. Independent services have many positives to offer the AAC community. Services can be designed around the person, be innovative and provide consistent input over a long term period. The support can be ideally matched to each individual AAC user. There are many examples of excellent co working between NHS and local authority services with the independent sector. However, there are also many barriers that exist and navigating these to provide the best fit service for each and every individual can at times be challenging. This workshop will outline some brief examples of co working with the independent, NHS and local authority services. It will then go on to gather views from all standpoints on this co working dynamic with an emphasis on the benefits and a discussion on how the barriers could be eased for the benefit of AAC users and those supporting them. The long term aim is to highlight this issue and to establish a way forward to support AAC users to access services that meet their needs.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

2.7: Developing a neurodivergent-affirming assessment experience for Autistic AAC users

Robinson, Helen - Author; Darley, Sally - Co-Author

Submission ID

9

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

As a Specialised AAC Service, The Barnsley Assistive Technology team frequently receive referrals for Autistic children for an assessment for a communication aid. We have reviewed our practice to consider how Autistic children might use AAC in a different way to neuro-typical children, in order to promote a more neurodivergent affirming experience for the children referred to us. As part of this review, we have reflected on the information we ask for at the referral stage. We have also considered the content of our assessment reports and how we can make these more supportive of neurodivergent communication regarding the language we use and the goals we set for Autistic AAC users. The term Gestalt Language Processing (GLP) has featured heavily in discussions relating to how Autistic children learn language. The use of delayed echolalia (where children copy words or phrases, sometime after first hearing them) has often been seen as a deficit, however the work of Marge Blanc (2012) has proposed that echolalia is an important first stage of language development for

some Autistic children. Most graphic symbol vocabularies and AAC interventions follow a 'typical' analytical language pathway, where children are expected to first use single words, then short phrases and finally sentences. In our team, we have explored ways to make our work more neurodivergent affirming, by exploring what aided communication might look like for someone learning language predominantly via GLP. One particular challenge we have encountered is how we know if somebody might be using GLP if they are non-speaking. We will discuss the sources of information we've explored, the changes we've made and the questions we still have regarding neurodiversity-affirming AAC practice.

References (Optional)

Ref: Blanc, M. (2012). Natural Language Acquisition on the Autistic Spectrum. Northern Speech Services.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

Child

2.8: Describing language levels: Alternative Response Modalities - enhancing rehabilitation (ARMer)

Murray, Janice - Author; Latham, Katy - Co-Author; Butt, Ayesha - Co-Author; Ruscito, Ilaria - Co-Author; Taha, Yasmine - Co-Author; Stadskleiv, Kristine - Co-Author; Lynch, Yvonne - Co-Author

Submission ID

44

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Background: In 2020 the I-ASC research came to an initial conclusion (Murray et al, 2020). One finding suggested that many AAC recommendations were made without quantifiable knowledge of the child's language comprehension levels. A recurring explanation for this was an absence of AAC tools that could be used by speech and language therapists (SLTs) from 'off the shelf' and applied to recognised language comprehension assessment procedures. 'Off the shelf' materials did not include electronic eye-gaze resources as typically available tools. Clinicians were seeking a protocol to offer consistent ways of reporting language comprehension abilities in children who need AAC. To this end we began to explore what this could include. Methods: We developed an assessment instruction protocol to enable us to evaluate novice SLTs' ability to consistently deliver language

comprehension assessment via eye pointing or partner assisted scanning techniques using an Eye-Transfer frame. The protocol included written and video instructions for both an eye pointing and a partner assisted scanning process. Participants were randomly assigned to either eye pointing or partner assisted scanning options as their first encounter with assessment and training content, i.e., a video explanation or a written explanation of how to deliver an assessment mediated through either eye pointing or partner assisted scanning. Data was collected at Manchester Metropolitan University or the University of Oslo/University Hospitals. Novice SLTs were pre-registration candidates. We tested the robustness of training materials. If robust, it could be applied more widely within practice. Results: We recruited 40 + novice clinicians. Initial analysis suggests that written and/or video training material alone is insufficient to support consistent assessment delivery techniques in novice practitioners. At present video training looks favourable to written information. Discussion: Initial findings reinforce that knowledge in how to assess language comprehension is paramount. Discussion will explore how this can be facilitated.

References (Optional)

Murray J, Lynch Y, Goldbart J, Moulam L, Judge S, Webb E, et al. (2020). The decision-making process in recommending electronic communication aids for children and young people who are non-speaking: the I-ASC mixed-methods study. Health Serv Deliv Res;8(45). https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/hsdr/hsdr08450/#/abstract Webb, E.J.D., Lynch. Y., Meads, D., Judge, S., Randall, N., Goldbart, J., Meredith, S., Moulam, L., Hess, S., Murray, J. (2019). Finding the best fit: A discrete choice experiment on the decision making of augmentative and alternative communication professionals. BMJ Open, 9:e030274. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2019-030274 Lynch, Y., Murray, J., Moulam, L., Meredith, S., Goldbart, J., Smith, M., Batorowicz, B., Randall, N., Judge, S. (2019). Decision making in communication aid recommendations in the UK: Cultural and contextual influencers Augmentative and Alternative Communication. 35(3): 180-192. doi: 10.1080/07434618.2019.1599066 Murray, J., Lynch, Y., Meredith, S., Moulam, L., Goldbart, J., Smith, M., Randall, N., Judge, S., (2019). Professionals' decision making in recommending communication aids in the UK: Competing considerations Augmentative and Alternative Communication. 35(3): 167-179. doi: 10.1080/07434618.2019.1597384

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

2.9: "Say cheese"

Street, Mark - Author

Submission ID

5

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Does this sound familiar? Imagine someone you know has received a new high-tech AAC device. How often do you hear the question, "How do I add photos?". I am sure this happens when you set up a device, as it certainly has happened to me on many occasions during my years in AAC. I typically find when I am setting up a new device or training people on how to use and support AAC devices, people believe adding photos to a button can enhance the user experience and make using the device more intuitive and user-friendly. During this session, I would like to discuss and share the pros and cons of adding photos to high-tech AAC devices. These opinions are based on my own experiences over the years that I have supported AAC implementation and the feedback from those I have supported. This session will be interactive and fun, and I would encourage people to share their ideas/thoughts and strategies. Audience members can volunteer to share ideas and discuss their experiences and even participate in the presentation to make it more fun.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

I work for Liberator

3.1: Gaining Hubb access for people with direct access, but still have limited hand control and motor skills.

Hewson, Helen - Author

Submission ID

4

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Gaining Hubb access for people with direct access, but who still have limited hand control and motor skills. I moved to West Sussex in January 2019 to live with my fiancé, we both hoped that my Communication and ongoing AAC needs would be met through our nearest Hubb at Chailey Heritage. Over the next few months it became clear that this would not be

possible because I didn't meet the criteria for the Hubb, because I can use direct access to a keyboard with a key guard. All be it very slowly with frequent typing errors due to my lack of hand control. After a fight the local CCG agreed to fund a replacement Allora. This meant that I needed to obtain and fight for funding every time that my aid needed any repairs or maintenance. This situation continued for the next two years until August 2022, when I started experiencing some pain in my arm and hand which made my typing more difficult and even slower. The letters on my Allora keyboard were all becoming very faded, and the battery was only lasting half the day. We arranged another meeting with my local Speech Therapy Team to see if they could help me at all. they agreed to come and meet us and discuss my case again. At this meeting it was agreed that my needs were changing, and it was worth getting Chailey to come back and Re assess me for their criteria. When we explained my situation was changing and that my hand control was deteriorating, they eventually agreed to accept me into their Hubb Service. I'm pleased to say that after a trial with Grid 3 from Smart Box last November, Chailey agreed to supply, fund, and maintain my Smart Box and ongoing communication needs.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

3.2: AAGI: Non-contact switch system for patients with severe motor dysfunction to enhance normalization and participation

Nishida, Daisuke - Author

Submission ID

29

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

We have developed Augmentative and Alternative Gesture Interface (AAGI), a non-contact switch system for people with motor dysfunction. The AAGI can be used to encourage social participation and normalization. Now, more than 60 persons with severe motor dysfunction tried to use and over 10 persons have used over 1 years. We will expand the use of AAGI throughout Japan and around the world. AAGI is an application system that recognizes the user's small movements with a commercially available 3D camera with their own computer. The core technology is an application of image recognition, which is developed based on the concept of high detection accuracy, easy setup, and non-contact usage. Once the AAGI is

set up, it can be used reproducibly even if the user moves and returns to the original location. The accuracy of this device can be applied to e-sports. One example of a participants with sever motor dysfunction due to Duchenne Muscle Dystrophy, is playing the internet connected racing game "Mario Cart" or sandbox game "Minecraft" with his friends around the world. The system can be the interface to the Metaverse and connect with his friends and society in a world beyond his physicality. So this system can be used to encourage social participation and normalization, such as "playing," "learning," and "working. This system has been approved as a eligible for daily living equipment by local government (Kashiwazaki City, JAPAN) and the patient will get benefits under the Comprehensive Support for Persons with Disabilities Act. We will expand our activities throughout Japan and around the world to support persons with severe motor dysfunction.

References (Optional)

http://gesture-interface.jp/en/

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

3.3: Chailey Communication System

Styles, Hannah - Author

Submission ID

59

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The Chailey Communication system is a vocabulary system designed for children and adults who have a severe visual and physical impairment, alongside limited or no speech. It is particularly tailored to individuals who require an auditory scanning approach. The system was first created in 1991 and has been widely used by AAC users at Chailey Heritage School as a means to communicate keywords and phrases for a variety of functions. Over the years the system has been updated by Speech and Language Therapists in collaboration with input from AAC users and education staff. The system is available to be purchased as a low-tech system through the Widgit website and can be edited using the InPrint software. In this session we will explain what the system is, who it is appropriate for, recent vocabulary updates, user feedback and opportunities to look at the system.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

3.4: How can robust symbolic vocabularies fit into a universal level AAC offering in school?

Robertson, Euan - Author

Submission ID

72

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Universal, targeted and specialist interventions are widely accepted terms in the field of speech and language therapy in the UK, with many SLT departments adopting the Balanced System. The Balanced System framework, developed over 15 years, was devised to provide a practical, holistic solution to the challenge of meeting the needs of children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). Alternative and augmentative communication services have often been mentioned as part of this model but rarely has the model been directly related to AAC assessment and implementation. In this session the presenter will compare the Balanced System to other models such as the MTSS (Multi Tiered System of Support) used in the USA. MTSS is a data informed, three tiered framework which is being adopted by school districts across the USA, it helps define the core instruction, targeted work and intensive individual work students may require to succeed. The presenter will present a vision for universal, targeted and specialist approaches which benefit all learners using robust symbolic vocabularies and discuss how these may look given the advances in recent years both in the use of off-the-shelf technology, and the development of robust symbol vocabularies. Is the UK ready for a universal approach to symbolic language and what does this entail? Participants are encouraged to share their experience and models as well as challenges they have encountered in managing this topic.

References (Optional)

Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301 (2015). https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177 Better Communication: Shaping speech, language and communication services for children and young people (Gascoigne, M.T., 2012, (ed.)) Implementing the SEND reforms: Joint commissioning for children and young people with SLCN (Gascoigne, M.T., 2014)

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Details of sponsorship

I am an employee of AssistiveWare.

3.5: The Effect on Curriculum Learning Outcomes of using Communication Software to Support Students who rely on AAC

Stanton, Marion - Author; Baggley, Laura - Co-Author; Blackbourn, Philippa - Co-Author

Submission ID

78

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This session will examine how the learning potential of students who rely on AAC can be maximised with reference to potential benefits of using AAC software in the curriculum. AAC software supports curriculum access with the least physical effort in the shortest time with the maximum independence. The session will consider the need for expert AAC teachers as well as Speech and Language Therapists so that the curriculum gets attention from the relevant professionals. Difficulties with working memory occur when students have to navigate multiple locations at a slow pace. Speakers produce up to 250 words per minute while an AAC user using the selection of icons navigated for between screens is likely to produce no more than 15 per minute. Three cognitive phases are Input, elaboration, and output. Students who rely on AAC may only have output available. Without effective ways to receive input or the ability to elaborate on the input students are at a disadvantage in realising their learning potential. There is minimal research into the use of AAC in the curriculum and also in teaching practice for this population of students. The sub-group of students who have dyskinetic cerebral palsy often have many age-expected cognitive functions but, despite this, many struggle to learn literacy. A need arises for further research in the area of learning support for students who have reliance on AAC, in particular, on how AAC software can be employed to support the receptive and elaboration or manipulation phase of learning so that the output phase gives a more accurate picture of the cognitive abilities and learning potential of this cohort of students. Ways in which AAC can be utilised in the curriculum will be supported with reference to research and a case study.

References (Optional)

Belland, B. R., Kim, C. M. and Hannafin, M. J. (2013) 'A Framework for Designing Scaffolds That Improve Motivation and Cognition', Educational Psychologist, 48(4), pp. 243–270. doi: 10.1080/00461520.2013.838920. Brown, C. T. (2018) 'Correlation between working memory, intelligence, and cognitive functions', J Altern Med Res, 10(2), pp. 139–154. Calculator, S. N. (2009) 'Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and inclusive education for students with the most severe disabilities', International Journal of Inclusive Education, 13(1), pp. 93–113. doi: 10.1080/13603110701284656. Leatherman, E. M. and Wegner, J. R. (2022) 'Augmentative and Alternative Communication in the Classroom: Teacher Practices and Experiences', Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 53(3), pp. 874–893. doi: 10.1044/2022_LSHSS-21-00125. Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (2017) 'Speech, language and communication capacity. A national asset.' Available at: https://rcslt.org/wp- content/uploads/media/Project/RCSLT/speech-and-language-communication- capacity-factsheet-2016.pdf. [accessed 28 th January 2023] Stadskleiv, K. (2020) 'Cognitive functioning in children with cerebral palsy', Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology, 62(3), pp. 283–289. doi: 10.1111/dmcn.14463. Stanton, M. (2022) 'Report for J's Annual Review 21 st October 2022 ' Internal Report: Communication and Learning Enterprises' Unpublished. Thistle, J. J. and Wilkinson, K. M. (2013) 'Working memory demands of aided augmentative and alternative communication for individuals with developmental disabilities', AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 29(3), pp. 235–245. doi: 10.3109/07434618.2013.815800.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

Although this is not a sponsored session, my place at the conference is paid for by CandLE.

3.6: Research involvement: the what, why, and how, of getting involved in AAC research

Broomfield, Katherine - Author; Moulam, Beth - Co-Author; Whittle, Helen - Co-Author; Hanschell, Amy - Co-Author

Submission ID

81

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Communication Matters exists to support people who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in their basic human right to communicate, be included, and be heard in an equitable society. One of the ways that we aim to achieve this is by encouraging AAC research. Research is an important way of developing and extending knowledge about AAC devices and the support that will enable people to be included and to be heard. As an organisation we have been reflecting on how we can encourage AAC research and support people who use AAC to be involved in research. We recognised that it is important to give people who use AAC an opportunity to be involved in research as it offers an avenue for their voices to contribute to the development of new knowledge about AAC devices and services. We also acknowledge the benefits that researchers gain from working collaboratively with people who use AAC, and how much they benefit from having people with lived experience as part of their project teams. During this session we aim to share some of the opportunities and benefits for AAC users and researchers in collaborative research. We will hear from researchers and people who use AAC who have been involved in research about their experiences. We will then facilitate a question-and-answer session to learn how Communication Matters can support research. The workshop will aim to address: 1) How to make volunteering for research more accessible 2) Identifying ways to connect researchers with people who use AAC 3) Learning what support people who use AAC want or might need in order to get involved in research.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

3.7: Self-created Film and AAC Technologies

Norrie, Chris - Author; Legel, Mascha - Co-Author

Submission ID

27

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

How might the enabling advantages of digital technology be harnessed to support and enrich access to shared personal narratives? We introduce and describe a novel practical teaching method in combination with a research method (for evaluation): Film as Observable Communication (FaOC) explores how digital audiovisual/film media - created by aided narrators themselves - may be used as one of the underpinning building blocks in communication and storytelling. As individuals, in order to share our stories dynamically (and most efficiently), we may adopt strategies from a diverse constellation of resources, for

example: spoken/written/signed language; gestures; vocalisations; eye-pointing; facial expressions and, as described here, other visual cues such as images. Self-created film can be used for capturing detailed contextual information of an experienced event, to encapsulate a mix of those sensory elements (e.g., aural/visual) that may prove definitive. Where a disabled user experiences communicative challenges, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) solutions - tools and/or strategies that support people with limited functional speech - can assist them in expressing their thoughts, ideas, and emotions. A strength of today's increasingly affordable, and thereby ubiquitous, digital technology is that we now have the means to support every learner in becoming their own filmmaker and storyteller. The unique, multimodal properties of film distinguish it as a practical and accessible medium for storytelling, one that goes beyond the conventional borders of language. How useful and, importantly, how much fun would it be to merge digital self-created film and AAC technology to support users in the sharing of their stories? In this presentation, we describe the use of ethnographic methods or approaches in combining digital film media with AAC technologies, both in school and at home, to support communication.

References (Optional)

Legel, M., Soto, G., Grove, N., & Waller, A. (2017, September). Musketeers for Storytelling and Film in AAC. In Communication Matters: CM2017 National AAC Conference. Legel, M., Grove, N., Soto, G., Waller, A., Steenbergen, B., Van Balkom, H., & Deckers, S. (2018, July). How was your day? My Film, My Story! teaching method. In 18th Biennial Conference of the International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication: AACcess All Areas.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

3.8: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An exploration of Identity

Cameron, Lois - Author; Steiner, Nikky - Co-Author; Tullio, Lucia - Co-Author

Submission ID

32

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Discussing complex issues like Equality, Diversity and Identity can be difficult, for example, people may not always feel comfortable having these conversations or they may feel scared about saying the wrong thing. This is an important issue for us to address, as Prof Hartha Kathard said at the Royal College of Speech and Language conference 2021 'understanding identity is key to inclusion' and 'turning the gaze to reflect on our positionality is central to change. It is key that people who use AAC can talk about how their communication aid reflects:

- their own Identity
- and Identities that may be different from their own

Through lock down people have been working together to create a new tool that will help make these conversations easier. This group was made up of:

- people who use a communication aid to help them communicate and
- different professionals from healthcare organisations who worked in AAC and or diversity and equality work

The group created a safe place for people to have a conversation about the identity issues they would like addressed. They created a glossary with both images and shared definitions. This workshop will present ;

- the glossary.
- its current use.

It will report on the pilot project where practitioners used the glossary as a Talking Mat to act as a helpful catalyst to support supervision conversations. Examples will be given that illustrate how it has helped staff to explore assumptions, unconscious bias and or life experience that may be impacting on their work. Using this resource in supervision raised helpful questions and ideas that have allowed staff to improve the quality of their services.

- The workshop will give attendees a chance to explore the resource
- Discuss the next steps for this resource

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

Talking Mats Ltd was involved in developing it in partnership with South Westminster centre for health care and CM - however the glossary is freely available and what happens next will be discussed at the workshop.

3.9: Update on the project to develop the 'AAC IS MY VOICE' training course.

Martindale, Alysia - Author

Submission ID

75

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The project explored the development of training for communication partners, as research has identified this training is needed because of the struggle communication partners experience to provide opportunities for communication. Online training has developed over the years, especially during the pandemic, but there is, as yet, little research as to its effectiveness (1). Also within the previous research, the voices of AAC users have been limited (2), yet their voices are fundamental to the development of high-quality evidence-based practice. This study aimed to explore what factors influence whether an online training course using programmed instruction specifically designed for communication partners can effectively enhance their knowledge and understanding of the value of AAC to people who use it, and their confidence to implement AAC strategies. The research was conducted in an adult residential care organisation that supports individuals with a range of complex communication needs, which sponsored the research and where the lead researcher worked. Phase two implementation included other residential settings. A multistage mixed-methods design was used. Phase one of the research focused on gaining the views and opinions of participants on a proposed online training using a mnemonic developed by the researcher (AAC IS MY VOICE) incorporating key communication skills identified from research. Phase two of the study, first amended the proposed online training following feedback collected in phase one, then aimed to explore how these amendments impacted trainees' knowledge, understanding of AAC and confidence to implement AAC strategies. This presentation will provide a recap of phase one which was presented in 2021, as well as the methodology used and the results from phase two.

References (Optional)

(1) - McCoy, A., & McNaughton, D. (2021). Effects of online training on educators' knowledge and use of system of least prompts to support augmentative and alternative communication. Journal of behavioral education, 30, 319-349. (2) - Dee-Price, B.-J. M., Hallahan, L., Nelson Bryen, D., & Watson, J. M. (2021). Every voice counts: exploring communication accessible research methods. Disability & Society, 36(2), 240-264.

Level
General Session

Age Group
Adult

4.1: An Introduction to Eye Gaze Wheelchair Driving Using Ability Drive

Fielden, Simon - Author

Submission ID

96

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Ability Drive is a control system that enables the user to drive a powered wheelchair using eye gaze technology. Typical users may be people with Motor Neurone Disease (1) and Cerebral Palsy, indeed anyone who is unable to physically access a wheelchair control system, (joystick or switches) or is finding physical access difficult. Ability Drive was developed by Tolt Technologies in the United States and has a growing user base across the World. Ability Drive consists of software that runs on an eye-gaze based computer tablet, linked to hardware that provides the control interface to the powered wheelchair. The software system displays a series of selectable directional arrows overlaid on the camera view forward of the user. Software options will be presented alongside illustrative videos of the system in use. Indications and contraindications for Ability Drive use will be discussed. Key factors will be discussed with this system, including compatible communication tablets and compatible wheelchair and control systems. Safety features and risk assessment will be explored in detail. Approaches to provision of this system in the UK will also be discussed.

References (Optional)

1. Elliott MA, et al. Eye-controlled, power wheelchair performs well for ALS patients. Muscle Nerve. 2019 Nov;60(5):513-519. doi: 10.1002/mus.26655.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

4.2: TD Snap and the Gestalt Language Processor

Langley, Alice - Author; Levy, Erin - Author

Submission ID

105

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Like all AAC users, Gestalt Language Processors need a customised set up to ensure success when developing language skills. In this session we will discuss how through simple and intuitive editing, you can set up TD Snap to support Gestalt Language Processors from stage 1 to 6. We will demonstrate how you can use the existing tools within TD Snap to personalise a page set for a Gestalt Language Processor. We will also discuss how those

around the Gestalt Language Processor can model successfully and without expectation in order to support language development within their setting.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Child

4.3: My Ability: A free resource to support people with disabilities explore their identity

Power, Hayley - Author; Sharples, Andrea - Author

Submission ID

84

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

My Ability is an exciting new resource to help people with disabilities and their parents and carers to understand their diagnosis, personally grow and develop self-acceptance. This is a free, downloadable, comprehensive, practice-led resource developed jointly by ATtherapy, a specialist speech and language therapy company, and Recolo a clinical psychology service. MyAbility is a set of themed therapeutic activities, presented as a series of sessions devised to enhance self-worth and a positive self-identity for young people living with a traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy and/or autism. The aim is to develop clinical resources that provide the opportunity to have conversations about a young person's identity, emotional wellbeing and aspirations for their future. We have developed packs of resources and activities specifically for Cerebral Palsy, Traumatic Brain Injury and Autism that can be delivered to young people individually and as groups. We have also developed packs for parents and carers to be delivered in parallel sessions to their child. The resources are adaptable to be used in face to face or remote contacts and are designed as a collection of stand-alone resources and tools that can be incorporated into therapeutic interventions. This workbook is packed with activities to engage people in conversations around these issues, that can be difficult to discuss. The presentation will take participants through the background of the resource, the practical activities and will discuss case studies of people who have engaged in these activities to date. My Ability won the Mike Barnes award for innovation at the UKABIF conference 2022 and was shortlisted for the innovation award at the Communication Matters AAC Awards 2023. Come along to find out how to support young people to have these conversations and discuss the difficult questions.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

4.4: AAGI: Augmentative and Alternative Gesture Interface

Yoda, Ikushi - Author

Submission ID

87

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

We developed a gesture interface for individuals with motor dysfunction who cannot use normal interface switches. These users have cerebral palsy, quadriplegia, or traumatic brain injury and experience involuntary movement, spasticity, and so on. Our aim is to provide these individuals with an easy and low-cost interface for operating PCs, controlling indoor environment, and maintaining contact. To this end, we utilized commercially available RGB-D cameras and developed a non-contact, non-constraint interface. We collected effective 1745 gestures from 80 persons with motor dysfunction and classified voluntary movements on the basis of body part. We developed all algorithms for recognition in-house and used only a few basic camera libraries to obtain 2D and 3D images. If the RGB-D camera is discontinued, we can transport all software to another camera easily. We have finished seven recognition modules dependent on body parts and two independent recognition modules. The seven recognition modules are Head, Wink, Mouth-Tongue, Shoulder, Finger, Knee, and Foot. The two recognition modules are Front object and Slight movement. We call this software the Augmentative and Alternative Gesture Interface (AAGI) and will open it sequentially. All software is now supplied freely. Please check our HP. We have started the spread of software now in Japan. We have held classes for Tokyo Association of Occupational Therapists and lend PCs and RGB-D cameras in free to hospitals and visit care centers for introduction of the software. Over thirty hospitals are now utilizing the software for inpatients. The users use the software for controlling PCs, games (PC, Switch, PlayStation and Xbox), home electric appliances, and so on. We have started the spread of software in Euro too. Two facilities are utilizing the software for inpatients already.

References (Optional)

http://gesture-interface.jp/en/

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

4.5: Jabbla UK's New Resources and Innovations

Dale-Rourke, Jake - Author; Foulger, Ian - Author

Submission ID

97

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Join us at the Communication Matters event this year as Jabbla UK presents an exciting lineup of new resources and innovations. PODD Printed Books In collaboration with Gayle Porter, we are thrilled to introduce the ability to print all the PODD communication books directly from Mind Express. Our collection includes versions in UK, American, and Australian English. Translation Pagesets Experience true multilingualism for AAC users with our newly developed live translation pagesets. These pagesets cater to both literate and symbol-based communicators, enabling seamless communication across different languages. AlphaCore You may already be familiar with the AlphaCore pageset, expertly crafted by Amy Roman through years of experience with MND patients. The Mind Express version of AlphaCore comes packed with fresh and innovative features, including an Eyegaze accuracy test. Introducing the Vibe12+ Come and see the new Vibe12+. This new addition boasts a larger screen size while maintaining the compact footprint of the Vibe 12. It's the perfect blend of enhanced visuals and convenience, making communication even more captivating.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

4.6: The next generation of lightweight communication aid from Smartbox

Waits, Adam - Author; Poole, Simon - Author

Submission ID

88

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Presented by: Adam Waits (Head of Assessment) and Simon Poole (Technical Director) We have been working closely with AAC users and professionals to create our next

generation of products, for communication anytime, anywhere. Join us to learn about the exciting launch of our latest device. Our next generation iPad-based device combines a sleek new design with leading edge accessibility features, created to be lightweight and purpose-built for AAC users. The ideal choice for anyone who needs portable and durable communication on-the-go. All the latest features have been designed from the ground up for AAC to help people access communication and participate. A new ergonomic, tactile handle makes our next generation device easy to carry. It can also be mounted to your wheelchair or carried using the shoulder strap, to take it with you, wherever you go. The new model includes an adjustable stand, to position your device exactly how you like. Unmissable blue power and volume buttons provide users with more control over their device. LED indicator lights and audio feedback let you know when switches are connected and when the battery is charging. Whether you're using our next gen communication aid at home, school, work, or on-the-go, its ready for the inevitable knocks and bumps of everyday life. We build products that are durable and made to last, with a reinforced internal structure and drop tested to 1m. In this talk you will learn how our latest product has been designed and tested for AAC users, by AAC users. Discover how feedback helped create the best specification for our latest speech device, for accessible communication on the move. Learn about all the features before launch, and experience Grid on the most durable and lightweight device from Smartbox.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

4.7: my-own-voice: a voice banking journey.

Magnusson, Susanne - Author; Mazars, Nicolas - Author

Submission ID

94

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

We will give the audience the whole background about my-own-voice service, how it was initially developed, what was the idea to do mov, and where we are going with a glance at the future. The talk includes the demonstration of the latest innovations with the enhancement through Deep Neural Networks models and the benefit of voice banking service. All to provide individuals with speech disabilities a voice with enhanced quality. The process is still based on the recording of only 50 sentences. It takes around 15-20 minutes to do the recording. With the possibility to add custom messages. All you need is a computer (laptop, desktop), an external headset microphone and an internet connection. The demonstration will list and explain the key steps in the journey for user from registration to the final delivery into a TD product such as TD Talk (complete voice banking journey), TD Snap and other AAC applications/devices from the field. In addition to this, we also have the

new possibility to create a child voice within my-own-voice version 4 in several languages. The talk will list the latest languages supported, and explain the process and the way we train the models to offer the closest approximation of a children's voice. my-own-voice v4 was released on April 17, 2023.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

4.8: Proloquo2Go versus Proloquo face-off: Making sense of the options - an interactive session on evaluating AAC apps for informed decision making

Niemeijer, David - Author; Robertson, Euan - Co-Author

Submission ID

65

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

These days there are plenty of robust AAC options. How do you choose between apps and devices? What features and aspects should you consider? In this session we will together with the attendees explore what the common criteria are for choosing an AAC solution and how they might be matched to user needs. We will also consider what features or aspects might need more attention than we usually award them. Next we will apply the identified criteria to Proloquo2Go and Proloquo in a live on-stage comparison. Bring your own favourite AAC apps or device to follow along. Find out what aspects you never considered and how that plays out for your favourite product. This session is not about naming or shaming products, but about growing our understanding of the strengths of each individual product. At the end of the session you will not only have a much better understanding of the key differences between Proloquo2Go and Proloquo. You will have also broadened your perspective on how to assess and evaluate robust AAC products and match them to user needs.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

4.9: 2023 - a year like no other!

Gabrielle, Emily - Author; Street, Mark - Co-Author

Submission ID

92

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

2023 has been a whirlwind of a year for #TeamLiberator with a whole host of exciting releases and team updates! Join us for a whistlestop tour of all 2023 has offered up so far – and maybe even get a sneak peek of what's to come in 2024…. This session will allow you opportunity to update your knowledge of all our new releases, including software features, new devices, services and support, staff members and more! Plus it's your opportunity to ask us those burning questions you may have and tell us what you want to see from us in 2024. Hopefully you'll feel as 'empowered', energised and enthusiastic as we do about all our amazing AAC solutions.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

5.1 & 8.6: A workshop about what AAC users want for their future

Moulam, Beth - Author; Hewson, Helen - Co-Author

Submission ID

18

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Communication Matters is committed to supporting the mental and physical health of people with communication impairments through access to appropriate AAC resources and strategies. As trustees who use AAC we hope to help develop the services and opportunities that are wanted by you to facilitate you taking control of your own destiny.

Often once we leave education it is challenging to access further training and this is where we need your help. We would like to invite you to join a discussion that will inform Communication Matters future strategy and fund raising to deliver education and training around the things that are important to AAC users. During the session we will be asking 4 questions that you might like to think about in advance, please consider pre-programming some initial contributions so that everyone gets the opportunity to take part. These are: Introduction and what do you do now? Eg: Your name and if you are in education, you volunteer, have paid work or other commitments. What education and training might you like in the short term? Eg: mentoring course, being a role model, undertaking communication access audits, other ideas. What other types of training might you like for the future? Eg: leadership skills for living independently, understanding your rights, realising your dreams, creating and delivering presentations, programming your device, using technology effectively, other ideas. If Communication Matters can get funding how would you like any education and training delivered? Eg: Face to face, online learning, mixture of both, residential or day courses It is important that we hear the view of AAC users, you are welcome to bring personal assistants to the workshop but we ask them/others to refrain from contributing to allow AAC users to freely share their opinions. Please come and have your say on your future.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

5.2: Development of Culturally Appropriate Urdu Core Vocabulary Symbols for AAC Users

Shuja Ansari, Misbah - Author; Butt, Ayesha - Co-Author; Draffan, E.A - Co-Author

Submission ID

79

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Background: Core vocabulary is critical for functional communication for users of augmentative and alternative methods of communication. At present there are no culturally appropriate symbols present for Urdu in Pakistan, which have been selected by users and their families. The pictographic symbols are borrowed from the West (Draffan et al., 2015), therefore development and adaptation for other languages is recommended (Tönsing at al., 2022). The study aimed to develop culturally appropriate symbols for Pakistani, Urdu speakers. A symbol management and user symbol acceptance system was created and

piloted to provide opportunity for the participants to influence the establishment and assessment of suitable symbols. Methodology: The cross sectional study was conducted in Pakistan. 100 participants participated which included 25 teachers, 25 parents, 25 parents and 25 people with SLCN. The study followed a 4 step design. Stage 1: Development of graphic symbols Stage 2: Online Review . Four criteria were addressed on a 5 point rating scale: a) feeling about the symbols b) represents the word or phrase c) color contrast, d) cultural sensitivity. A minimum rating of 3.33/5.0 was required for each symbol to be accepted. A core-vocabulary list designed as part of the ongoing project was used as a basis for symbol generation. Step 3: Voting by end users Step 4 : Compilation Results: A total of 203 symbols were created and 168 symbols received a rating of 3.33 score. Where two symbols received the same rating, the participants were requested to make a decision on which was considered more accurate. The final compilation contained 41 highest rated symbols for each core word. Conclusion: The study has successfully created culturally sensitive and appropriate Urdu Core Vocabulary symbols that can be used by professionals, parents and AAC users for effective communication.

References (Optional)

Draffan, E.A., Wald, M., Halabi, N., Sabia, O., Zaghouani, W., Kadous, A., Idris, A., Zeinoun, N., Banes, D. and Lawand, D., 2015, September. Generating acceptable Arabic core vocabularies and symbols for AAC users. In Proceedings of SLPAT 2015: 6th Workshop on Speech and Language Processing for Assistive Technologies (pp. 91-96). Tönsing, K.M., Bartram, J., Morwane, R.E. and Waller, A., 2022. Designing electronic graphic symbol-based AAC systems: a scoping review. Part 1: system description. Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology, pp.1-13.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

5.3: You Are Never Too Anything ... a Literacy Journey

Voizey, Tina - Author; Walker, Gina - Co-Author; Walker, James - Co-Author

Submission ID

62

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

As a student labelled with PMLD going through the special school system James was not given many opportunities to develop his language and literacy skills. He was labelled “too

complex" for it to be an appropriate part of his education. Fortunately for James he had a team around him which did not accept this. Thanks to crowd funding by a network of friends and family he received his first power based AAC system at 16 years. He finally had a voice and as it turns out he had plenty to say. The pursual of a personal education budget meant upon leaving secondary school an alternative plan to being placed in a specialised college (where literacy instruction would not have been an option as he was deemed "too complex and too old" for it be worthwhile) could be realized. At the age of 21 James began his literacy journey and hasn't looked back. This session will highlight how James' education team live by the mantra "No student is too anything to learn to read and write." (1) It will demonstrate how they are using a comprehensive literacy framework (2) to structure, plan and implement engaging and appropriate daily emergent literacy interventions. It will highlight how these language rich lessons are giving James the opportunity to grow his communication alongside developing the building blocks for reading and writing learning. Lastly, it will discuss how learning to read and write has led to an improved quality of James' life with countless positive outcomes for both him and his team.

References (Optional)

1. Yoder, D. DJI-Ablenet Literacy Lecture, 2000. 2. Erickson, K. & Koppenhaver, D. Comprehensive Literacy for All, Teaching Student with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write. 2020.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

5.4: The route from playful interactions to AAC for pupils with high support needs. Enabling the development of authentic and spontaneous communication.

Millward, Charlotte - Author; Osman, Laura - Co-Author

Submission ID

60

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Children with severe and complex needs experience communication challenges and require the opportunity to develop methods of communication that are alternative to speech. However, there are many barriers that impact upon the successful implementation and

development of alternative and augmented communication (AAC)1. The majority of these barriers are related to communication partner skill and expertise, access to AAC resources and opportunities for authentic and meaningful communication embedded throughout the day. In practice, children are often taught to request for objects using symbols or signing during designated communication sessions and communication skills are often considered in isolation of all other developmental areas2.

By gathering evidence of children's learning and communication development over time, we documented a route from playful interactions to symbol-based AAC for pupils with high support needs that develops authentic, spontaneous communication that is generalised to different contexts and communication partners3. The route starts by developing playful interactions and offering all children a symbol-based total communication environment. The robust "universal offer" is flexible, enabling educators to model and identify language which is meaningful and motivating to each pupil throughout every classroom activity. Information regarding a child's preferred communication method is gathered which informs the implementation of individualised and comprehensive low or high tech systems. Progression is dependent on highly skilled educators creating playful interactions and offering skilled support to create the 'just-right' level of challenge for each pupil in the moment and across a range of activities4,5. To create the just-right level of challenge, it is essential to understand the child's current communication, cognitive, physical and sensory and personal, social and emotional development6.

We gather evidence of learning through videos which we will share in the presentation as examples of the provision and the route that pupils with high support needs took from playful interactions to AAC.3,5,6

References (Optional)

1. Emily Lorang, Nell Maltman, Courtney Venker, Alyson Eith & Audra Sterling (2022) Speech-language pathologists' practices in augmentative and alternative communication during early intervention, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 38:1, 41-52, DOI: 10.1080/07434618.2022.2046853 To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618.2022.2046853
2. Cindy Gevarter, Mariah Groll, Erin Stone & Adriana Medina Najar (2021) A parent-implemented embedded AAC intervention for teaching navigational requests and other communicative functions to children with Autism spectrum disorder, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 37:3, 180-193, DOI: 10.1080/07434618.2021.1946846 To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618.2021.1946846
3. Millward, C. & Osman, L. (2022). Route to Communication [unpublished].
4. Weisberg, D. S., Hirsh-Pasek, K., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2013). Guided play: Where curricular goals meet a playful pedagogy. Mind, Brain and Education, 7(2), 104–112. https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12015
5. Millward, C. & Osman, L. (2020). The Springboard Curriculum. Inclusive special education in the early years foundation stage and key stage 1. A framework for integrating therapy and education. https://thespringboard.gumroad.com/
6. Millward, C. & Osman, L. (2022). The Springboard Curriculum: Assessment Framework. https://thespringboard.gumroad.com/

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

5.5: Virtual E-Tran Frames: a trial

Viera, Marc - Author; Endacott, Amy - Co-Author

Submission ID

38

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (RHN) is an independent medical charity that provides rehabilitation and long-term care to people with complex neurological disabilities. It is common for people on their RHN journey to benefit from an E-Tran (eye transfer) frame. Typically, this is a clear board with words, letters, or other symbols placed around the edge. The person with speech difficulties can look to the words, letters, or symbols and their communication partner can see where their eye are going through the frame. Typically, the communication partner needs some coaching in the use of an E-Tran frame to use it effectively. Increasingly, videotelephony is becoming part of our everyday communication practice. It has some aspects in common with face to face communication that maybe we can think a little creatively about. In this clinical experience presentation, the authors will share their experience creating a virtual E-Tran, using the background of a popular videotelephony software program. The presentation will include

- a brief overview of the Eye Pointing Classification Scale (Clarke et al 2020)
- a brief demonstration of using an E-Tran frame
- step by step instructions of how to create virtual E-Tran Frames for video calls on
  - MS Teams
  - Zoom
- challenges and strengths based on our trial

References (Optional)

ClarkeMT, SargentJ, CooperR, AberbachG, McLaughlinL, PanesarP, WoghirenA, GriffithsT, PriceK, RoseC, SwettenhamJ. (2020) Development and Testing of the Eye-pointing Classification Scale for Children with Cerebral Palsy. Disability and Rehabilitation. 1-6 Low Tech Solutions. (2023) What is an E-TRAN. Available at https://store.lowtechsolutions.org/what-is-an-e-tran/ (Accessed 17 April 2023)

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

5.6: Stories Beyond Words Collective - radical self-representations of communication diversity through immersive audiovisual artworks

Soreny, Cathy - Author; Preece, Jamie - Author; McMillan, Greta - Author; McMillan, Thea - Author; Fox, Emily - Author; Sullivan, Emma - Author; Welland, Kate - Author

Submission ID

107

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

‘Stories Beyond Words’ is a creative co-design research project, exploring radical self-representation of non-normative voices. Bringing together people with diverse communication impairments, including AAC users, we are co-creating immersive installations using video, projection mapping and multichannel audio. These artworks seek to creatively confront the ‘dyslistening’ (unknown, 2022) often experienced by disabled speakers and challenge the dominant ableist paradigms of communication. This project contributes to the growing movement around communication diversity and ‘dysfluency pride’ (Campbell et al, 2019). Creativity as a research approach takes people through a ‘thoughtful physical process’ which gives them a different context (to interviews, for example) to discuss and create their responses to issues, and also reflect upon their own identities (Gauntlett, 2018). We presented at CM 2022, just before starting creative workshops in October that year. We return to present our progress from the first creative cycle of the project. We will share key findings from the research process and audience reactions to our first exhibition, held as part of Sheffield Documentary Film Festival fringe programme in June this year. We will present a screening of part of our installation, followed by an explanation of the approach and an in depth discussion around the issues raised. Your feedback and comments will feed into the ongoing research process as we develop future installations.

References (Optional)

Campbell, P, Constantino, C, Simpson, S, 2019. Stammering Pride and Prejudice: Difference Not Defect. J & R Press, Guildford, UK. Gauntlett, D, 2018. Making Is Connecting: The Social Power of Creativity, from Craft and Knitting to Digital Everything, 2nd ed. Polity, Medford, MA. Unknown workshop attendee, 2022. Suggestion made during ‘Words Matter! Exploring new language around stammering’ workshop at STAMMAFest Global Stammering Conference, facilitated by Patrick Cambell and Sam Simpson

Level
General Session

Age Group
All Ages

5.7: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PRACTITIONERS IN THE AAC FIELD AND THE SIGNIFICANCE TO THE AAC WORKFORCE

McCormack, Angela - Author

Submission ID

55

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Our AAC Services rely on a range of specialist clinical roles for assessment, provision, implementation and maintenance of AAC systems. We are familiar with the roles of Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, SEN teachers, in the AAC field. We also see a range of supporting roles, of Speech and Language Therapy Assistant, Assistive Technologist, Technical Instructor, to name just a few. One such support role introduced into health and allied services in recent times is that of Assistant, or Associate, Practitioner. Ace Centre is a provider of specialised AAC services for NHS England. The organisation has grown significantly over several years and has recently added two Assistant Practitioner roles to the clinical team. At Ace Centre, the purpose of the Assistant Practitioner role is to support AAC Consultants, by assisting at assessments, installing client equipment, creating resources, providing training, follow up support and implementation services. As one such Assistant Practitioner, I will discuss my own experiences and the very broad scope of this role within Ace Centre. We will consider the skills, knowledge, experience and qualities required and the complexities around qualifications, CPD, supervision and career progression. There is current discussion in the AAC field about the difficulty in recruiting to the workforce. It relies largely on professionals from the above-mentioned disciplines where there is often more demand than capacity. For example, Speech and Language Therapy is now recognised by the UK Government as a shortage profession. Development of the Assistant role has potential to boost capacity in AAC services. This presentation aims to increase awareness of this role and will provide a platform for discussion and reflection about its place in the AAC workforce.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

5.8: How to facilitate acceptance of AAC-technology to improve the quality of life for people with Motor Neurone Disease

Vanhee, Griet - Author

Submission ID

33

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Not being able to communicate while going through the last stages of life with MND, causes social isolation and feelings of frustration, depression, and uselessness. In my experience as an SLT working with MND patients in Belgium for 18 years, I noticed that life with or without the right communication aids is very different. Nevertheless, the acceptance of assistive technology is not easy for patients, as it is tied to grief and acceptance of the loss of capabilities. It challenges professionals who want to help patients overcome barriers they face. The main purpose of AAC has always been to meet the communication needs that occur when speech intelligibility reduces or speaking gets too tiring. AAC offers them a way to communicate, stay connected with the people around them, to be able to express feelings and needs, to be able to ask questions to medical professionals, to be able to share information on their clinical situation, being heard as a person. But communication isn't the only need that can be met with this technology. The need for computer access, environmental control, entertainment and independence is also very important to this user group, who had always been informed, independent and in charge, before they got diagnosed with MND. With these advancements in technology, AAC can be tailored more to the needs and preferences of individual users and make acceptance easier. This approach recognizes that the journey of MND is a highly personal and individualized process. I will share how professionals can define individual interests, needs and limitations and match those to the right AAC solutions without referencing any particular AAC tools. The process and impact of this personalized approach will be illustrated through case studies and personal insights about dealing with the grief process related to the need for technological aids.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Details of sponsorship

I am an Account Manager for Tobii Dynavox but will not be referring to the brand during my presentation.

5.9: Similar students, different AAC outcomes: What can we learn from other countries?

Niemeijer, David - Author; Robertson, Euan - Co-Author

Submission ID

64

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Language use data from over 30,000 AAC users reveals stark differences between countries. In this session we explore AAC language use and language proficiency differences between the UK, Canada, US, and Australia. We collected anonymous English language usage data with consent from over 30,000 Proloquo2Go devices with the Crescendo vocabulary. This data was aggregated over 28 days and analyzed on the devices to ensure privacy. The data reveals that language proficiency indicators such as lexical diversity (a measure of the richness of the language produced) and unique conjunctions (a measure of the syntactic complexity) are relatively low in the UK compared to Australia. As data was collected anonymously, no information was available on the age and diagnosis of the AAC users, but there is no evidence of significant differences in populations. The data on word use and weekday versus weekend use shows that in all studied countries AAC is dominated by school use. In all countries iPads with apps are primarily provided to students without significant access challenges, including autistic students and students with a range of developmental delays. We found that in countries where selecting a large grid size has become a clinical practice norm for AAC users without significant access challenges, we see large grids sizes and better language outcomes. For all countries, larger grid sizes correlate with higher lexical diversity and a higher number of unique Brown's morphemes being used. Finally, we explore what could be done differently in the UK today to positively impact the opportunities and outcomes for AAC users. Participants will leave with at least one idea for something they can easily change starting tomorrow.

References (Optional)

Brown, R. (1973). A first language: The early stages. Harvard University Press. Charest, M., Skoczylas, M. J., & Schneider, P. (2020). Properties of Lexical Diversity in the Narratives of Children With Typical Language Development and Developmental Language Disorder. American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 29(4), 1866-1882. https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_AJSLP-19-00176 Light, J. (1989). Toward a definition of communicative competence for individuals using augmentative and alternative

communication systems. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 5(2), 137-144. https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618912331275126

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

The authors work for AssistiveWare and AssistiveWare paid for the research. The presented research is fundamental research rather than product focussed. No products will be recommended or advertised in the session, the focus is purely on AAC implementation.

P1: A National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) internship journey: When paediatric patients are provided with powered AAC by Barnsley Assistive Technology Service what happens to their previously used paper AAC?

Moran, Charlie - Author

Submission ID

12

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The poster summarises how the internship was used to develop this research question, highlighting the impact of the question and how Public Involvement sessions were included to develop conceptual frameworks that will inform further research in this area.

References (Optional)

1. Person based AAC, also referred to as “Unaided AAC”: Sigafoos, J., van der Meer, L., Schlosser, R. W., Lancioni, G. E., O’Reilly, M.,F., & Green, V. A. (2016). Chapter 10 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. (pp. 255-285). Elsevier Inc. 10.1016/B978-0-12-802075-3.00010-3
2. Paper based AAC Robinson, H. (2018, March) AAC technology: what’s in a name? RCSLT Bulletin (Issue March 2018) p.11
3. Partner based AAC Light, J., Beukelman David Richard, & Reichle, J. (2003).

Communicative Competencies for Individuals Who Use AAC, Volume 3
4. Power based AAC, also referred to as: a. “High-tech” Robinson, H. (2018, March) AAC technology: what’s in a name? RCSLT Bulletin (Issue March 2018) p.11 b. “Voice Output Communication Aid’ (VOCA)” Dean E. Sutherland, Gail G. Gillon & David E. Yoder (2005) AAC use and service provision: A survey of New Zealand speech-language therapists, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 21:4, 295-307, DOI: 10.1080/07434610500103483 c. “Speech Generating Device (SGD)” Sigafoos, J., van der Meer, L., Schlosser, R. W., Lancioni, G. E., O’Reilly, M.,F., & Green, V. A. (2016). Chapter 10 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. (pp. 255-285). Elsevier Inc. 10.1016/B978-0-12-802075-3.00010-3
5. Moran, C., Randall, N., & Judge, S. (2021) How do people who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication use multimodal communication in real life situations? A Literature Review Presented at Communication Matters: Submitted and awaiting publication to Communication Matters Journal
6. Sharynne McLeod (2018) Communication rights: Fundamental human rights for all, International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 20:1, 3-11, DOI:10.1080/17549507.2018.1428687

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

P2: 'It's AAC Jim but not as we know it' A short history of AAC - the Liberator story

Gabrielle, Emily - Author

Submission ID

13

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Come take a trip down memory lane as we look back over the last few decades and reflect on how the landscape of AAC has changed in this time. Follow our timeline and see if you can spot some old friends (both people and AAC) and wonder at how on earth some of the old systems actually worked! Our journey will be illustrated with comments, quotes and memories from some well known faces and whilst we look fondly to the past, we will also tip our hats to the future and the exciting landscape of AAC we find ourselves in today.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

I am an employee of Liberator Ltd

P3: A universal approach to modelling AAC within a college for students with complex learning needs

Hulme, Helen - Author

Submission ID

68

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Research and clinical experience indicate that modelling AAC is essential to support people to learn to use AAC (Biggs et al., 2018; O'Neill et al., 2018). Modelling AAC in education settings can be challenging, with barriers including class staff lacking time for training, and role misconceptions (Biggs and Hacker, 2021). This poster reports on the findings of a SALT team in a college for young adults with complex learning needs. Students within one class had been previously assessed by SALT and provided with individualised AAC. After later observing difficulties for staff in modelling this AAC, SALT worked alongside the team to identify key issues, which included: insufficient vocabulary for specific classes (e.g. art, animal care) and different layouts between students. This resulted in a high recall demand on staff, who had competing tasks to manage simultaneously. SALT opted to implement a universal approach, supporting inclusive communication using whole class communication boards. This was with the aim of facilitating communication development via an immersion approach, i.e. a language-rich environment based on the regular modelling of AAC (Dodd and Gorey, 2014). The subsequent communication boards (both in this class and then others) led to improved staff engagement: staff teams modelled the boards more routinely throughout the college day, for a wider range of communicative functions including how to comment and direct. Consequently, students demonstrated greater skill development in different areas of communication. This trial supports the importance of professional collaboration to achieve effective outcomes for students, as suggested by Biggs and Hacker (2021). The universal approach has facilitated AAC learning, as well as further dynamic assessment of individual needs. The impact of increased modelling input on receptive language requires further consideration (Laher and Dada, 2023). There also remain a range

of unanswered questions specifically relating to developing individualised systems for autonomous communication.

References (Optional)

Biggs, E. E., Carter, E. W., & Gilson, C. B. 2018. Systematic Review of Interventions Involving Aided AAC Modeling for Children With Complex Communication Needs. American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. 123(5), 443– 473. Biggs, EE, Hacker, R. 2021. Engaging stakeholders to improve social validity: intervention priorities for students with complex communication needs. Augmentative and Alternative Communication. 37(1), 25-38. Dodd, JL, Gorey, M. 2014. Intervention as an Immersion Model. Communication Disorders Quarterly. 35(2), 103-107. Laher, Z, Dada, S. 2023. The effect of aided language stimulation on the acquisition of receptive vocabulary in children with complex communication needs and severe intellectual disability: a comparison of two dosages. Augmentative and Alternative Communication. [Online]. [Accessed 23 April 2023]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618.2022.2155566 O'Neill, JL, Light, J, Pope L. 2018. Effects of Interventions That Include Aided Augmentative and Alternative Communication Input on the Communication of Individuals with Complex Communication Needs: A Meta-Analysis. Journal of Speech Language and Hearing Research. 61(3), 1-23.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

P4: Effectiveness, Experience and Usability of Low-technology Augmentative and Alternative Communication by Nonverbal Adults and their Communication Partners in the Intensive Care Unit: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review

Alodan, Hissah - Author; Sutt, Anna-Liisa - Co-Author; Hill, Rebekah - Co-Author; Alsadhan, Joud - Co-Author; Cross, Jane - Co-Author

Submission ID

20

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Background: Patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) are commonly on mechanical ventilation, either through endotracheal intubation or tracheostomy, which usually leaves them nonverbal. Low-technology augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies are simple and effective ways to enhance communication between patients and their communication partners, but not often used. Purpose: To systematically review current evidence regarding the effectiveness, experience of use, and usability of low-technology AAC with nonverbal patients and their communication partners in the ICU. Methods: This review included quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies of adult ICU patients aged 18 or older who were nonverbal due to mechanical ventilation. Studies using low-technology AAC, such as communication boards and pen and paper, were included. Six databases were searched, and the review was conducted according to PRISMA guidelines. A convergent segregated approach was used for data synthesis. Results: Thirty-one studies were included, of which 24 were quantitative, 4 were qualitative and 3 used mixed methods. Low-technology AAC improved patient satisfaction, facilitated communication, and met their physical and psychological needs. Communication boards with mixed content (e.g. pictures, words, letters) were preferred but used less frequently than unaided strategies (e.g. lip reading and eye blinking) due to patients' medical status, tool availability, and staff attitudes. Communication boards should be easy to use, adapted to patient needs, and supplemented with pen and paper. Patients undergoing operations should be introduced to the board beforehand to increase their comfort when using it post-operatively. Conclusion: The limited existing evidence suggests that low-technology AAC strategies satisfy patients' needs. Better usability could be achieved if the tools are properly implemented and challenges addressed. Further research is needed to establish a more thorough understanding of the design and presentation fundamentals of a communication board that would be easy to use yet sophisticated enough to cover the patients' needs in ICU.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Adult

P5: AAC Exams Access Group

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

Submission ID

21

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The AAC Exams Access Working Group is a group of AAC users, parents/carers, educational professionals, health professionals and suppliers of equipment from all across the UK. The group formed back in 2018 and has been meeting on a termly basis since, driven by the inaccessibility to examinations for AAC and other AT users across the UK. Since 2018 the group have had some positive feedback on the support now offered to students across England and Wales around access to formal examinations for AAC users. The meetings are attended by a range of professionals, including Speech and Language Therapists, educational staff, parents and carers, Local Authority representatives, suppliers and of course AAC users themselves. Following the first meeting back in 2018 it was clear that educational settings and other stakeholders needed some written guidance, to share best practice, to support students using AAC to access formal examinations from Key Stage One right through to GCSEs and beyond. It was important that the guidance set out what is available to students who use AAC in examinations, and prepared the student and the educational setting for collecting evidence to submit as part of access arrangements requests. We are also looking at exam access provision in the rest of the UK. The group produced a guidance document, 'Exams Access Guidance for Young People Who Rely Upon AAC', which is updated annually to reflect new guidelines (e.g. JCQ). The document is available on the Communication Matters website, (www.communicationmatters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_23-AAC-Exams-Access-Guidance.pdf) and will be updated as guidelines change, and more adjustments for individual cases are agreed. In addition for Key Stage 2 SATs guidance, there is a document applicable to those arrangements made by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA).

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

P6: The Unspoken Voices Project: How can augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) support people with communication disability towards greater participation in activities of daily life?

Broomfield, Katherine - Author

Submission ID

31

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Background People who experience communication disability can use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies to enable them to participate in daily life1. The NHS funds services that assess, make devices available to, and support people who may benefit from AAC devices. Current NHS strategy is promoting person-centred care and shared decision-making2. People who use AAC are frequently not included in decision-making about AAC devices or the support the receive with their AAC3, and it is not clear what outcomes are important to them4. Aims This project aimed to understand more about the factors that influence people's engagement with AAC devices and services, and what outcomes are important following receipt of AAC devices. The objective was to inform the development of a patient-reported outcome measure (PROM) that can be used to re-orient AAC services towards individual's priorities and therefore facilitate person-centred care. Method A public involvement (PI) group informed all aspects of this project5. Two systematic reviews6,7 and two phases of qualitative data collection were carried out8. A theory was developed during the project which was informed by John Shotter's representation of dialogue9. This theoretical perspective informed the qualitative data analysis that added depth and added authenticity to the results10 . Results A framework was generated to inform the further development of a PROM for AAC. Ideas that represent areas of significance and 33 statements that reflect important outcomes to people who use AAC were identified. Principles for practice in AAC were established that will support the implementation of a PROM and enable greater person-centredness during AAC interventions. Next steps The results will be used to inform the further co-design of a PROM to evaluate the impact of AAC devices and shape greater person-centredness in service provision. I have applied for further funding to build upon the results.

References (Optional)

1. Beukelman, D.R. and Light, J.C. (2020) Augmentative & alternative communication: supporting children and adults with complex communication needs. Fifth edition. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. 2. NHS (2019) NHS Long Term Plan. 1.2. Available at: https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf (Accessed: 1 November 2022). 3. Lynch, Y. et al. (2019) 'Decision-making in communication aid recommendations in the UK: cultural and contextual influencers', Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 35(3), pp. 180–192. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618.2019.1599066. 4. Baxter, S. et al. (2012) 'Interventions Using High-Technology Communication Devices: A State of the Art Review', Folia Phoniatrica et Logopaedica, 64(3), pp. 137–144. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1159/000338250. 5. Broomfield, K. et al. (2021) 'Creativity in public involvement: supporting authentic collaboration and inclusive research with seldom heard voices', Research Involvement and Engagement, 7(1), p. 17. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1186/s40900-021-00260-7. 6. Broomfield, K. et al. (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. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-019-02228-3. 7. Broomfield, K., Harrop, D., et al. (2022) 'A qualitative evidence synthesis of the experiences and perspectives of communicating using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)', Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology, pp. 1–15. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17483107.2022.2105961. 8. Broomfield, K., Judge, S., et al. (2023) Using longitudinal qualitative research to explore the experience of receiving and using augmentative and alternative communication. International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders (in review) 9. Broomfield, K., Sage, K., et al. (2022) 'The Unspoken Voice: Applying John Shotter's Dialogic Lens to Qualitative Data from People Who have Communication Difficulties', Qualitative Health Research, p. 104973232211398. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323221139803. 10. Broomfield, K. (2023)

Analysing the Unspoken: Finding richness created in dialogue with people who cannot speak. In: The Handbook of Creative Data Analysis (Kara, H., Mannay, D., & Roy, A. Eds). Bristol Policy Press, UK [due for publication Spring 2024]

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

All Ages

TUESDAY

6.1: Empowering the next generation of AAC users

Stowell, Kathryn - Author; Omar, Abdi - Co-Author; Hennings, Claire - Co-Author

Submission ID

54

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

This presentation looks at the inclusive classroom implementation of AAC and the impact of high aspirations and valuing the voices of everyone. Developed in partnership with CENMAC, a London-based assistive technology outreach service, the program is led by Abdi Omar a mentor, trainer and inspirational speaker. During the Covid-19 pandemic, our chat sessions moved online with unexpected benefits, including improved accessibility for AAC users and the ability to reach young people in schools across London. Key to the program's success is its emphasis on the value of AAC, Abdi's leadership as an adult AAC user himself and the use of AAC devices as a tool for modelling and visual support. By taking Abdi's sessions into the classroom and providing coaching and modelling for the entire class team, the program has seen surprising positive outcomes in the wider functions and competencies of AAC along with the speaking and listening skills of all the students. Through a playful approach, in which Abdi facilitates games and activities focusing on widening their vocabulary and knowledge of the categories and functions within their individual grid sets. Abdi also shares his personal experiences and advice from his earlier years. The sessions have increased engagement and motivation among the AAC users. This has made learning AAC skills more fun, enjoyable and effective for everyone in the room and reduced the barriers which are often observed within education settings. In our presentation we will share video footage, implementation and outcomes from our chat sessions, mentoring and staff training, demonstrating the program's success in empowering AAC users of all ages and impacting inclusive environments.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

6.2: Let's talk about mental health

Clay, Daisy - Author; Kirby, Anita - Author

Submission ID

49

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Speakers: Daisy Clay (SLT & Head of Content Development) and Anita Kirby (AAC Content Specialist) A workshop to explore how we can best support AAC users to discuss their mental and psychological health. Recent research indicates that the rate of mental health issues is much higher among those with complex communication needs (Watson, Reghavendra, & Crocker, 2021). This group are more likely to experience abuse, stress, anxiety, and ableism, which can contribute significantly to mental health issues. AAC users may also face challenges building support networks and forming strong human connections, which are protective factors against loneliness, depression, and mental health challenges. In this interactive workshop we will facilitate a discussion about how we best support and safeguard people who use AAC, so that they have access to and understand how and when to use language to discuss their mental health and wellness. We will cover language around feelings/emotional states, abuse, body parts, advocacy, and self-talk, and discuss how we choose the right vocabulary. Topics for discussion: - Providing the right vocabulary to help AAC users engage in fruitful communication with others about their mental state and engage in self-talk. - Introducing this vocabulary to AAC users of all ages. - Providing additional tools to support AAC users to build and maintain relationships. For example, ways to access online discussions or social media, send emails and make calls with their device, and maintain conversations with peers. - Understanding how the absence of mental health vocabulary may result in AAC users being under-identified with mental health conditions and subsequently deprived of access to important supports and therapy. This workshop will use Grid AAC software to demonstrate the concepts covered, however the content can be applied using other AAC systems.

References (Optional)

Eleanor Watson, Parimala Raghavendra & Ruth Crocker (2021): Mental health matters: a pilot study exploring the experiences and perspectives of individuals with complex communication needs, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, DOI: 10.1080/07434618.2021.1921845

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

Daisy and Anita are employees of Smartbox assistive technology.

6.3: Artificial Intelligence and AAC

Mensah, Priscilla - Author; Waller, Annalu - Author; McLaren, Robert - Author

Submission ID

77

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Tech developers and researchers are starting to create new AAC products that make use of Artificial Intelligence. Most of these products remain in the design, prototype or testing phase, however some may soon become more widely available. These products make use of AI for a range of features: from simply improving word prediction to offering new kinds of user interface that aim to increase the speed at which users can communicate. This session will provide: (a) an accessible overview of the current state of technological development in AI-for-AAC (b) discussion of the policy, regulatory, ethical issues and current frameworks (c) discussion of 'nothing about us without us' – how AAC users are already contributing to this topic, and what policymakers, tech developers, researchers, and practitioners can do to allow/enable AAC users to shape this agenda This talk will given by Prof. Annalu Waller, a leading expert in AI and AAC at the University of Dundee, and Priscilla Mensah, who is a Policy Fellow at the cross-party think tank Policy Connect, researching government engagement with disabled people around future technologies.

References (Optional)

Sennott SC., Akagi L., Lee M., Rhodes A. AAC and Artificial Intelligence (AI). (2019), 'AAC and Artificial Intelligence (AI)', sec. Components of Artificial Intelligence. Kristensson, P. O., Lilley, J., Black, R., & Waller, A. (2020), 'A Design Engineering Approach for Quantitatively Exploring Context-Aware Sentence Retrieval for Nonspeaking Individuals with Motor Disabilities'. Moulam, B. (2023) 'AI for speech' (https://www.bethmoulam.com/ai-for-speech/) Hemsley, B, Power. E., and Given. F. (2023) 'Will AI tech like ChatGPT improve inclusion for people with communication disability?' (https://theconversation.com/will-ai-tech-like-chatgpt-improve-inclusion-for-people-with-communication-disability-196481)

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

6.4: ‘Don’t stop believin’ - Back to the Future with Minspeak Vocabularies.

Street, Mark - Author; Gabrielle, Emily - Co-Author

Submission ID

6

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

We are going back to the future with Minspeak! Developed in the 1980s, at a time when shoulder pads were big, everyone wanted to own a Delorian, and Deirdre, Ken, and Mike were in a love triangle that gripped the nation, Minspeak was fast becoming the vocabulary to be seen with. 40 years on, Minspeak is still as powerful but not as popular in the UK as it was in the 1980s. In this presentation, we would like to 'turn back time' and explore the benefits of using a Minspeak vocabulary and show how these vocabularies can be supported, even in 2023! We want to overcome the myths surrounding Minspeak and the complexity often associated with it, demonstrate how it can be keystroke efficient, and how the support on offer can make it easy to implement. During the session, we will invite participants to join in and use a core board and engage in conversation using Unity. We hope by the end of our session you’ll be 'dancing on the ceiling’ with excitement about Minspeak and sharing our views when we say “Minspeak - we’re ‘never going to give you up’.”

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

We both work for Liberator

6.5: Multimodal communication: Exploring factors influencing why people use a particular mode.

Moran, Charlie - Author; Golborne, Holly - Co-Author

Submission ID

11

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Multimodal communication is about recognising that there are multiple means of communication such as facial expression, gestures, speech, signing, paper Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), and/or powered AAC (e.g. a Voice Output Communication Aid). These are all equally valid modes to communicate a message. Different factors are likely to impact how someone selects their mode of communication for an interaction, for example, using signing because it is quick or using a device because the message is complex. This session will: 1) Present a framework that was developed through a National Institute for Health and Care Research Internship programme. The framework illustrates some of the factors that influence why people use a particular mode during an interaction. This highlights the need to explore, identify and support different modes of communication so people have different options that they can use dependent upon the scenario or context. 2) Present case studies that will explore examples of people using different modes of communication in real life scenarios. We will consider the factors that contributed to each person's choice of mode for specific interactions. We aim to reflect on the benefits of multimodal communication and consider the role of the support team in enabling and supporting multimodal communication.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

6.6: Communication partner skills

Moulam, Beth - Author; Holmes, Joanna - Co-Author

Submission ID

17

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

When someone first meets an AAC user it can be scary, often all their 'usual' interaction skills fly out the window and they feel they need to act differently to normal. It can be hard to

remember that AAC users are just like everyone else, they are working hard to develop and use skills that come naturally to others. In turn communication partners need to feel relaxed and confident to support everyday interactions. What is a communication partner? Everyone who interacts with an AAC user is a communication partner. Considering the imperative of assuming the AAC user is competent and has the potential to learn. The importance of giving and receiving information effectively and understanding the multi-modality of communication. How to find the time to be a communication partner? Parents of children with complex needs often have many new, varied and diverse roles to add to juggle. Including delivering therapy programmes, numerous appointments, 'making life happen', and just to breathe. We'll be sharing strategies that have worked in practice. Who makes an ideal communication partner? Everyone can be great, however, a little guidance makes us all more confident. This includes common pitfalls and our top tips for communication. What skills do communication partners need? Understanding the importance of patience and time needed to respond with some active listening pointers. Recognising disagreement and remaining non-judgemental. The importance of modelling verbal, non-verbal communication and use of AAC, commenting, prompting and responding consistently. When and where are communication partners needed? Consistently everywhere from 1-1 situations, being in groups, home, school, going out and about. The key is around creating natural communication opportunities. Joanna is a non-practicing SLT whose daughter has complex communication needs. Beth is a post graduate student who has used high-tech AAC for over 25 years.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

6.7: Dynamic AAC Goals Grid: Updates and Use

Diener, Bethany - Author

Submission ID

15

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Writing goals for alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) users can be a challenging component of the intervention process. The free Dynamic AAC Goals Grid (DAGG, DAGG-2) has been used worldwide to help AAC service providers collaborate with team members (e.g., educators, family, related services, etc.) as they design intervention plans for individuals using AAC. Since its last update in 2014, knowledge in the field of AAC

has expanded and evolved; the DAGG must reflect the current state of the science and best practices. Based on research and feedback from users, the DAGG-3 has been updated without compromising what has made it a useful tool over the past 14 years. It continues to provide an initial picture of the individual's current level of communication ability across the communicative competencies, offer next steps for growth, and a view of progress thereafter. During this session, we will share our process in updating the DAGG as well as highlighting the updates themselves including easy-to-read goals, addition of literacy and access goals, updated prompting hierarchy, psychosocial goals entwined into the social competency, and example activities for each goal to facilitate successful intervention. Case studies will be used to illustrate use of the DAGG-3 without referencing any particular AAC tools.

References (Optional)

Clarke, V. & Tobii Dynavox (2023). DAGG3: Dynamic AAC Goals Grid and Planning Guide 3rd edition. (Link is not yet available.) Clarke, V. & Tobii Dynavox (2014). DAGG2: Dynamic AAC Goals Grid and Planning Guide 2nd edition. http://tdvox.web-downloads.s3.amazonaws.com/MyTobiiDynavox/dagg%202%20-%20writable.pdf Dowden, P.A. & Cook, A. M. (2002). Selection Techniques for Individuals with Motor Impairments. In J. Reichle, D. Beukelman & J. Light (Eds.). Implementing an Augmentative Communication System: Exemplary Strategies for Beginning Communicators. Baltimore, MD. Brookes P. 395-432 Koppenhaver, D.A., Coleman, P.P., Kalman, S.L., & Yoder, D.E. (1991). The implications of Emergent literacy research for children with developmental disabilities. American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 1 (1), 38-44. Light, J. (1989). Toward a Definition of Communicative Competence for Individuals Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems. Augmentative and Alternative Communication. 5, (2):137-144 Light, J., & McNaughton, D. (2014). Communicative competence for individuals who require augmentative and alternative communication: A new definition for a new era of communication? AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 30(1) Schneider, H., & Clarke, V. (2009). The original DAGG. Dynamic AAC Goals Grid and Planning Guide: Addressing Competence across Ability Levels. Sulzby, E. and Teale, W.H. (1991). Emergent Literacy. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal & P.D. Pearson, (eds) Handbook of Reading Research. Vol 2, pp727-757. New York: Longman.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

I am an employee of Tobii Dynavox and will state this at the beginning of the session.

6.8: Access to electronic assistive technologies: A project exploring local services and pathways to accessing technology in South Yorkshire

Broomfield, Katherine - Author; Clarke, Zoe - Co-Author

Submission ID

8

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Background In 2015 specialised services were established for Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) and Environmental Control (EC), with the goal of ensuring that there is an equitable service for people requiring these electronic assistive technologies (EAT). Great work goes on in local teams to maximise the potential of those who do not meet specialist service criteria, however there are some groups of people who potentially may not get the same level of service due to the complexity of their physical and cognitive disabilities. A project, funded by the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, was initiated in 2022 to explore local pathways for access to EAT (including AAC and EC) across Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster, and Rotherham. Method Clinicians from health services, social workers and occupational therapists in local authorities, specialists in special schools, and the managers of day and residential services were invited to take part in an online semi-structured interview or a group conversation. The aim of this conversation was to find out about arrangements for EAT assessment, provision, and access to support for people who don't meet specialised services criteria. Results Information was gathered from several health and local authority staff across the South Yorkshire area in early 2023. Pathways to access for AAC and EC varied greatly across the area and were significantly different across health and social care providers. People reported challenges in levels of awareness, in access to equipment for assessment and practise, and limitations in services or pathways for people who may not be able to use EAT functionally and consistently, and in a range of situations. Conclusion Further work is required to raise awareness about the potential benefits of EAT for people with complex disabilities. Improved consistency in messaging about the advantages of technology for independent control across ICB footprints is recommended.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.1: Building eye gaze skills with Look Lab

Mobbs, Trevor - Author; Martin, Becky - Author

Submission ID

90

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Presenters: Trevor Mobbs (AT Resources Manager) and Becky Martin (Clinical AAC Specialist) Look Lab is a new software package from Smartbox offering a selection of accessible games and creative activities, designed to help disabled people build eye gaze skills in a relaxed and enjoyable way. Eye tracking technology has been available for over 20 years and has helped thousands of people around the world access communication and enjoy greater independence. While advancements continue to be made, implementation remains a common challenge. Look to Learn is a popular software package used in education and assessment settings to help introduce eye gaze skills, however it is not always suitable for older users who want more age-appropriate content. In this talk we will introduce you to Look Lab, a companion product to Look to Learn, designed to help users of any age build confidence with eye gaze in a fun and enjoyable way. 5 activity types: Fun: relaxing games that are easy to learn and get started with Challenge: more complex and strategic games that involve time dependent reactions Puzzle: activities with a problem-solving element Creative: activities focused on music or art Mindfulness: simple cause and effect activities that support relaxation and screen engagement The 38 activities included in Look Lab cover early eye gaze and learning, through to more advanced games and activities for users to enjoy as their skills advance. We will demonstrate a selection of Look Lab activities and the skills that they help to build. We will also look at the broad range of users that Look Lab is suitable for, covering different age groups, levels of experience and motivations. You will also learn more about the User Interface (UI) design and the options available to customise the user experience.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.2: Scene & Heard Pro - understanding how to use visual scene displays across the lifespan

Bright, Rebecca - Author; Gadgil, Swapnil - Author

Submission ID

100

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

An overview of the evidence related to the use of visual scene displays across the life span, with examples of application via the Scene & Heard app.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.3: Literacy Program Subscription, accredited courses, on-line training and low-tech resources

Stanton, Marion - Author; Baggley, Laura - Co-Author

Submission ID

101

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

CandLE's Literacy program is now being offered as a subscription service which will be fully explained and demonstrated in this session. Currently platformed on Grid 3, the program consists of Phonics, Reading, and writing schemes written by CandLE alongside commercial programs, such as Read Write Inc. and Little Wandle for those schools who use them as well as a comprehensive assessment of spelling and reading. CandLE also has a library of 400 books which can be provided to schools that already own a hard copy. CandLE is newly offering accredited courses which aim to support students in bridging their learning so that they might be able to access conventional qualifications. The courses include: Bridge to English, Bridge to Maths, World Knowledge, Independent Living through Technology and Instruction and Personal Project, which is a thinking skills course based on students' personal interests. The courses run from the Engagement Curriculum level right through to the end of Key Stage 2. CandLE's online training offer includes the basics of AAC, using AAC in the curriculum, and using AAC to access assessments and examinations. Finally, we will be showing a range of low-tech resources that we offer including our popular, waterproof, hard-to-destroy spelling boards, predictable chart, alternative pencil and communication book.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.4: How to rule your iPad with eye gaze and Hiru

Paul, Winfried - Author; Martinez, Oihana - Author

Submission ID

91

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Assistive technology is a crucial tool for children and schools to achieve independence, communication and inclusion. IRISBOND strives to lower barriers and to allow any individual to amplify their options in eye gaze communication. We believe that an operating system should never be a barrier. Now, you can use your eye-tracker Hiru in iPadOs or Windows, indistinguishably. In this session we'll see how to leverage Apple accessibility tools to create the best user experience with the IRISBOND Hiru eye tracker. We'll explore what's possible with eye gaze in the iPad, tips for fast success and apps designed with eye gaze in mind. Discover the possibilities to rule the world around you with just your gaze, Hiru and your iPad!

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.5: CALL Scotland - Supporting Learners to access the curriculum through AAC

Harrison, Claire - Author

Submission ID

95

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 8 with a skill mix and backgrounds ranging from teaching and speech and language therapy, to assistive technology and engineering, supported by 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, core word vocabulary kit and our AAC Scotland website online professional learning materials. We will update on new and ongoing projects and resources.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.6: The future of AAC is now!

Gregory, Rob - Author; Naraynsingh, Joe - Co-Author

Submission ID

103

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

AAC software hasn't changed much in the past decade. We've seen a similar approach to developing solutions, often different titles sharing similar features. But what if there was a different way to do it? What if that different way meant it was easier to implement, required less training, less support and was designed to allow the user to control exactly what they used and did away with all the baggage they don't? Many people accessing Assistive Technology require products that will allow them to engage in all aspects of their lives. This includes communicating with loves ones at home and beyond, completing essential tasks for work and accessing technology for fun! Communicating beyond talking is now a day to day aspect of everyone's lives. We want our products to fit into what people want to do rather than trying to fit what people want to do into our products. We want to enable people to do what they once did or never thought possible. Adapting AAC to allow access to certain websites or apps is fantastic and a powerful tool. But what if you have the tools to allow you to get on almost any website or apps with zero set up and programming? In this session we will be discussing how TD have broken the mould and launched a whole new approach to AAC for the literate user (established or emergent) which allows them to explore communication far beyond the limitations that traditional AAC software offers.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.7: Mounting

Quick, Christian - Author

Submission ID

102

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Join us in this session to examine the needs and requirements for mounting different assistive technologies with a focus on mounting speech generating devices, access methods (ie: switches), iPads, tablets, and phones. Explore different mounting solutions that allow users to access assistive technologies both in and out of wheelchairs in multiple environments. Utilize the latest in technology to find the exact solution for your specific needs. You will also get a closer look into the Swingaway mount. We will also be looking into our training week which take place in October, you will have your chance to book in to the dates at the end of the session. Our promise: Mounting made easy!

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.8: Discover how to use Widgit Software to personalise resources (including the latest Autism Support Pack)

White, Sue - Author

Submission ID

85

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Widgit Software is proud to showcase the New Autism Support Packs for both InPrint 3 and Widgit Online Subscribers. The new packs for both Home and School use have been created by Widgit's own Specialist teachers with input from both professionals and the autistic community. The session will summarise the content of the packs which are

organised within the four sections of an Education, Health and Care Plan and demonstrate how each of the resources can be personalised through the addition of photographs, manipulation of symbol colours, text and skin tones, as well as providing a starting point for the creation of users own resources. Delegates will be able to view a number of new symbols that have been added to the database to support sensory regulation and toileting skills, among many others. In addition, the demonstration of InPrint 3 will highlight the new 'Presentation Mode' feature which allows users to create and export symbolised resources directly into PowerPoint or Google Slides presentations.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

7.9: Talking Mats Digital Insights

Watson Stanfield, Eilidh - Author

Submission ID

106

Submission Topic

Exhibitor Session

Abstract

Talking Mats™ have exciting news to share about a digital innovation project that we have been working on. Over the last year, Talking Mats have embarked on a research project with the University of Stirling and the University of Kent to enhance our Digital Talking Mats platform. Talking Mats is a visual communication tool used world-wide, across a range of sectors. This tool was developed through 22 years of academic research originating at The University of Stirling. Talking Mats involves a 'thinker' and a 'listener' and uses a series of context-relevant images (called Options) within a defined framework to actively support conversation, self-expression, and self-determination. Currently, the Digital Talking Mats platform captures the final placement of Options once the thinker has completed a Talking Mat. The technology is not currently able to collect any additional data. This project aims to develop a system that will collect additional data, including: the time taken to place Options, if Options have been re-placed, mouse-movements, eye-movements and other observable communication cues. It is hoped that the additional data will provide valuable insights for Talking Mats users. Many people use non-verbal communication cues in everyday conversations to assist in expressing their thoughts and feelings. This is especially important for those who have communication difficulties. Using the webcam on a laptop to record non-verbal communication could give practitioners further insight into the views of the people that they work with. Talking Mats is encouraged by the outcomes of this feasibility project and are excited to share some details before we move onto the next stage of testing. We would also be delighted to share news about new resources that have been developed that are available on our digital platform. To keep up to date on Talking Mats news, please visit https://www.talkingmats.com/blog/

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

LT8.1: Incorporating voice input technology into everyday communication - a study of voice input voice output communication aid apps

Fryer, Kate - Author; Hawley, Mark - Co-Author; Judge, Simon - Co-Author; Cunningham, Stuart - Co-Author; Palmer, Rebecca - Co-Author

Submission ID

58

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Developments in speech recognition technology have led to apps which can learn to recognise a set of words or sounds spoken by the individual with dysarthria, and connect these with a clear spoken output. Our previous research provides some evidence that these voice input communication apps may be faster than traditional communication aids. Our current study aims to find out who can benefit from this technology, and what support they will need to use it successfully. This information can be used by professionals involved in providing communication aids, and will help us to plan further research into their effectiveness. We are recruiting 20-30 individuals with dysarthria, who will be asked to use a voice input communication app in their everyday lives for 6 months. We will collect information on whether the app improves their communication, and helps them reach their goals. We will also run focus groups with professionals involved in providing and supporting people with communication aids, to understand factors affecting their ability to provide the support identified as needed by our communication aid users. This presentation will situate this study in the context of previous research, and detail our progress so far, and what we hope to achieve.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

LT8.1: Approaching accessible user experience (UX) design for AAC software

Reichelt, James - Author

Submission ID

63

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Speaker: James Reichelt (Design Lead) In this Lightning Talk, James will explore how product designers can help to ensure that every AAC user has the option of being in complete control of their software. That means never losing access to their voice, even when switching between programs, settings, and games. By placing accessibility at the very core of UX design practice, AAC users have the power to change their own experience, and advocate for the activities and tasks that they want to do. This presents a notable design challenge when creating AAC software. The nature of eye tracking technology, and other forms of alternative access, can sometimes result in access being lost. By discovering all the points when the user may lose access, we can put safeguards in place to ensure a user never loses their voice and has a seamless experience. This talk will highlight some of the ways to approach this design challenge, including explorative techniques and the importance of involving AAC users within the design process. While Smartbox products will be used to demonstrate these concepts, the focus will be on the design process.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

James Reichelt is an employee of Smartbox assistive technology.

LT8.1: Rethinking a child centred approach to introducing AAC to young autistic children - why we should put parents first

Williams, Hannah - Author

Submission ID

80

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Hannah has worked with young children with complex communication needs for around 18 years and has recently started an independent practice delivering online parent coaching and support to families so they can successfully and confidently introduce AAC (apps and paper based) to their child who is or who may be autistic. Hannah will consider what it means to put parents first within a family centered model and why this may actually lead to the best outcomes for the child. She will share reflections and challenges that come from delivering a timely and effective SLT service that meets the needs of the child and their families while setting them up for long term communication success. She will discuss creative and family centred ways to make the most of the time families give professionals. She will pose questions about the future of AAC for young children who are or who may be autistic. Hannah will discuss why putting parents first at the particular moment in the therapeutic journey when a family are first exploring and introducing AAC may achieve the most efficient, effective and sustainable outcomes for the child.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child

Details of sponsorship

The training course referred to in my presentation is available from me to purchase.

LT8.1: Finding my voice: Lucy's high school saga and the power of AAC

Beck, Lucy - Author; Turner, Nieve - Co-Author

Submission ID

82

Format

Lightning Talk

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

I was 7 when I got my first communication aid. Starting high school in 2017, I felt overwhelmed because I hadn't used my device much. It was challenging, I could only read and struggled with spelling. I started using my device more in school when I learnt how to spell. My English TA helped me through a lot and helped me to build my confidence back up as she never gave up on me. When I was 12, my Speech Therapist got me into social media, I started with Facebook and found it really difficult to begin with but I never gave up trying. I now use Facebook, Snapchat, Tik Tok and Instagram on a daily basis with no troubles. I use this to talk to my friends and family, post selfies and make videos. This makes me feel so much more independent. When I started my GCSE's. I was so worried but I was determined to pass. I would revise and had my TA would scribe my notes for me. My school couldn't have been more helpful. I was able to have extra time, my own room and had a scribe to write down my answers. I am now in college studying Health and Social care and want to be a Special Educational Needs Teacher. Being at college has made me realise that I won't have the same level of support I had, because of this I really struggled coming to terms with leaving but it made me realise how helpful they really were… even if I didn't realise it at the time. I really couldn't do things I can do today without my school TAs. With the help of these people I gained knowledge and also unbelievable support that will help me on my future path to success.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

8.2: Provision and Abandonment of Assistive Technology: An evaluation of the KM CAT AAC equipment provision service

Garrett, Claire - Author

Submission ID

24

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

AAC service provision in England is based on a model comprising of both specialist and local AAC services. While there is centralised funding of specialist AAC services, the commissioning of local AAC services varies significantly across the country. In Kent, there

are no commissioned local AAC services for adults. Assessment, provision and support of AAC for the majority of adult AAC users falls to local SLT teams, with specialist services provided by Kent and Medway Communication Assistive Technology (KM CAT). For these local SLT teams, AAC users may constitute only a minor portion of their total caseload; funding and therapist expertise/confidence in AAC may be limited. In East Kent, local adult SLT services assess for and request provision of AAC equipment (non-specialist) via the KM CAT AAC equipment provision service - funded by local commissioning arrangement. Due to service constraints, local SLT services may discharge AAC users without routine review, in some cases, soon after provision. This does not allow local SLT's to assess the effectiveness of the provision and determine if the equipment meets/continues to meet the patient's needs. Here we present an evaluation of the KM CAT AAC equipment provision service performed in 2019, investigating the effectiveness of this service with particular emphasis on abandonment/suitability of the equipment provided. An abandonment rate of 42% was found with a number of AAC users identifying inappropriate initial provision or a change in needs as the reason for abandonment. These results highlight the inefficiencies of providing AAC in this way and the need for commissioned local AAC services.

Level

Specialist Session

Age Group

Adult

8.3: My journey through education to residential college

Evans, Milly - Author; Murphy-Mann, Saffron - Co-Author; Blackbourn, Philippa - Co-Author

Submission ID

26

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

I am now a young adult, but I've used AAC since I was a toddler and by 7 I was using high tech accessed via eye gaze. I started attending a special school for physical disabilities, then mainstream for secondary and 6th form, followed by a local specialist college. Before the pandemic I was thinking about going to a residential college but 2 years in isolation meant I really wanted to be among people. I visited colleges and was supported by my team of professionals to make the decisions to select my college placement for myself. I would like to present:
* the timeline of making the decision to go to residential college
* the structured process of selecting between my options
* how I came to understand which factors were most important to me

* how the things I experienced on visits shifted my thinking totally
* how I communicated my preferences to those with the power to get me to college and then
* a brief reflection of the transition and how the first year of residential college was for me.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

8.4: Supporting adult AAC users with progressive conditions

Osmond, Dee - Author

Submission ID

76

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Adults with progressive conditions often have unique access and communication needs that are important to consider in the assessment and implementation of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Common diagnoses of this population include motor neuron disease, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy. Important considerations in the provision of communication aids include accessing the device, communication methods used and engagement in meaningful activity. New adult AAC users are unique as they often come with many years of experience of using computer-based technology in their daily lives. They are familiar with specific operating systems, software, apps and digital tasks. As their condition progresses, their device access method is likely to change, or they may use multiple access methods. This presentation will cover considerations and professional experience in AAC assessment and implementation with this population. There will be a focus on the importance of digital connection and participation in digital daily tasks. For them, communication often is more layered than just face-to-face interactions. They may use texting, FaceTime, social media as a means of communicating and staying connected to their loved ones. I will demonstrate the importance of keeping the user in a familiar digital environment and how that impact their success with AAC. We will discuss alternative access methods with a focus on eye tracking and switch scanning as well as operating systems that can support this. There will also be several diverse case examples of users with different goals and experience, and time allotted at the end of the presentation for questions and round-table discussion of the cases and attendees clinical experience working in this area.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

Details of sponsorship

I am employed by Tobii Dynavox.

8.5: 1Voice Discussion: How the charity has approached regional branches and community events for AAC users in 2023.

Carroll, Dominic - Author

Submission ID

69

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

1Voice is a UK charity that creates opportunities to bring together children and adults who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and people important to them (family/PAs/supporters), to share ideas, information, skills, and personal experiences. 1Voice connects members through online events, annual residential events, and local branch activities. The charity aims to increase public awareness of AAC through newsletters and online activities, including its website and social media. Connecting AAC users and their families in supportive networks is at the heart of what 1Voice does. In 2023 our focus was: - Building up AAC-led local networks, whether that be local meet-ups or establishing regional branches. - Connecting with more families and offering members more opportunities to get together face-to-face, online and in person. - Supporting the development of our role model project via regional branches. Feedback and interest led us to focus initially on restarting get-togethers at 1Voice Lakes & Bay, 1Voice Yorkshire & North East, 1Voice North West, 1Voice London & South East, and 1Voice South West. This workshop discusses: - How we approached regional branches in 2023. - The impact they currently have. - How we hope to support regional branches in the future. - How we hope to support our role model project through future regional events. We also want to open the floor for input from others. We are particularly interested in hearing: - What you would like to see more of at our regional events. - If you have ideas about how to support regional branches to be self-sustaining. - If you or anybody you know would like to get involved in running events at regional branches.

References (Optional)

1Voice 2023. 1Voice. [Online]. [Accessed 28 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.1voice.info/.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

5.1 & 8.6: A workshop about what AAC users want for their future

Moulam, Beth - Author; Hewson, Helen - Co-Author

Submission ID

18

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Communication Matters is committed to supporting the mental and physical health of people with communication impairments through access to appropriate AAC resources and strategies. As trustees who use AAC we hope to help develop the services and opportunities that are wanted by you to facilitate you taking control of your own destiny. Often once we leave education it is challenging to access further training and this is where we need your help. We would like to invite you to join a discussion that will inform Communication Matters future strategy and fund raising to deliver education and training around the things that are important to AAC users. During the session we will be asking 4 questions that you might like to think about in advance, please consider pre-programming some initial contributions so that everyone gets the opportunity to take part. These are: Introduction and what do you do now? Eg: Your name and if you are in education, you volunteer, have paid work or other commitments. What education and training might you like in the short term? Eg: mentoring course, being a role model, undertaking communication access audits, other ideas. What other types of training might you like for the future? Eg: leadership skills for living independently, understanding your rights, realising your dreams, creating and delivering presentations, programming your device, using technology effectively, other ideas. If Communication Matters can get funding how would you like any education and training delivered? Eg: Face to face, online learning, mixture of both, residential or day courses It is important that we hear the view of AAC users, you are welcome to bring personal assistants to the workshop but we ask them/others to refrain from contributing to allow AAC users to freely share their opinions. Please come and have your say on your future.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

8.8: Supporting Literacy and Language: Common Threads, Common Practices

Donnelly, Maureen - Author; Diener, Bethany - Co-Author

Submission ID

42

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Whether you are a parent, teacher, speech-language therapist, or related service provider, charting a course for an AAC user that simultaneously supports literacy development and AAC use can feel like a juggling act. Yet, time spent nurturing growth in one realm will produce gains in others. Literacy and language develop transactionally, recursively, and in mutually reinforcing ways (Koppenhaver, et. al, 1991). Even when we embrace this conceptual underpinning, knowing where and how to begin can be tricky. In this session, speakers will define the conceptual underpinning for language and literacy development. They will identify three fundamental tenants, including the right of all people to have relationships, experiences, and instruction that help them develop communication skills, access to education that provides varied repetition of skills and strategies, and learning opportunities that shift focus away from what learners know and toward what they think. Presenters will delineate key evidence-based strategies that benefit any beginning AAC user at any age to develop their reading, writing, and communication skills regardless of their AAC. Ultimately, this session will reinforce that there is no need to choose between instruction that builds language and that which enhances literacy development. Exposure and meaningful engagement with routines like shared reading and writing, for example, help AAC users grow their reading, writing, listening, and communicating skills. Further, literacy and language are lifelong endeavors. Instruction and support at any age can lead to later conventional abilities.

References (Optional)

Banajee, M., Dicarlo, C., & Buras Stricklin, S. (2003). Core Vocabulary Determination for Toddlers. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 19(2), 67–73. Crestani, C. A. M., Clendon, S. A., & Hemsley, B. (2010). Words needed for sharing a story: Implications for vocabulary selection in augmentative and alternative communication. Journal of Intellectual

and Developmental Disability, 35(4), 268-278. Douglas, Fisher & Nancy, Frey (2014). Content Area Vocabulary Learning. The Reading Teacher, 67(8), 594–599. doi: 10.1002/trtr.1258 Erickson, K. A., & Geist, L. A. (2016). The profiles of students with significant cognitive disabilities and complex communication needs. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 32(3), 187-197. Heath, S. M., Bishop, D. V., Bloor, K. E., Boyle, G. L., Fletcher, J., Hogben, J. H., ... & Yeong, S. H. (2014). A spotlight on preschool: The influence of family factors on children's early literacy skills. PloS one, 9(4), e95255. Kame'enui, E. J., & Baumann, J. F. (Eds.). (2012). Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice. Guilford Press. Zangari, C., and Paiva, S. (2012). Look Who's Talking: A Curricular Approach to Core Language Instruction for Prekindergarten Children with AAC Needs. Presented at ISAAC 2012.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

We (Bethany Diener and Maureen Donnelly) are each employed by AAC/education companies (Tobii Dynavox and Building Wings respectively).

9.1: An AAC User's Experience Transitioning Into University Life

Tyler, Becky - Author

Submission ID

50

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

As a dyslexic AAC user who uses eye gaze technology to access my studies, I have had a unique experience integrating into university. I am two years into my Applied Computing course at the University of Dundee, and I have faced various challenges and obstacles, but I have also found ways to overcome them. In this presentation, I will share my personal experiences of communicating with students and lecturers and integrating into the student community. I will discuss the issues I have faced when accessing university systems, software and learning platforms which were not designed with AAC users like me in mind. I will also compare and contrast my experiences studying remotely versus in-person. I will discuss some of the support systems I now have in place, including the people I work with

for study skills, note-taking, and assistive technology (AT) support. I will also delve into the AT set up that enables me to access all the required software for course modules. Finally, I will offer advice for other disabled students who would like to study at university, to help them feel confident and empowered to pursue their academic dreams. From advocating for yourself to seeking out available resources and suitable support, there are various steps that AAC users can take to ensure a positive and inclusive university experience, ensuring equal access to all opportunities.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

9.2: The use of Assistive Technology to support Literacy teaching for learners with Complex Communication Needs

Ebbage-Taylor, Meaghan - Author

Submission ID

71

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Literacy for learners with Complex Communication Needs, including AAC users, is fundamental in enabling fully autonomous communication – empowering learners to say what they want to say, when they want to say it. The Comprehensive Literacy for All approach (Erickson, Koppenhaver 2019) is becoming more widely used in the UK, focussing on both emergent and conventional learners. Literacy learning begins at birth, and within the classroom context 'no student is too anything to learn to read and write' (Yoder, 2000). Literacy teaching for learners with Complex Communication Needs, who use AAC, is becoming more widely implemented and at the forefront of educator's practice in the UK, for example due to the Teach Us Too charity and the recent publication by Sarah Moseley (Moseley, 2023). Learners with complex communication needs, including those who use AAC, often find accessing Literacy learning in the traditional way challenging, for example using pen and paper and being able to manipulate objects physically, whether that be books or tactile letters. For these learners, Assistive Technology is essential to allow equality in access to the curriculum. The presentation will present practical solutions to support learners who require the use of Assistive Technology to access Literacy learning. It will focus on how widely available technology can be used for learners with complex communication

needs. This can support them in overcoming barriers, enabling their access to the curriculum, specifically focussing on Literacy learning. This presentation will discuss how this technology can be implemented, and examples on its success in narrowing the discrepancy between learners. This presentation will discuss examples of both hardware and software and examples of when it is appropriate to use these.

References (Optional)

Erickson, K and Koppenhaver, D (2020) Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write. Brookes Publishing Co. David Yoder, DJI-AbleNet, Literacy Lecture, ISAAC, 2000 Moseley, S (2023) Teaching Reading to All Learners Including Those with Complex Needs: A Framework for Progression within an Inclusive Reading Curriculum.Routledge (nasen spotlight)

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

9.3: Empowering individuals to express their views on AAC through Talking Mats

Cameron, Lois - Author; Small, Katherine - Co-Author; Cardador, Claire - Co-Author

Submission ID

30

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Practitioners' experiences of using Talking Mats to empower people to think and express their views about alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) will be presented. Lessons learnt and the positive impacts of using Talking Mats will be shared. The creation of four new Talking Mats resources and a new online Advanced Training Module will be discussed. The aims were to improve the involvement of people who use AAC in service provision and to develop the skills and confidence of practitioners. There will be the opportunity to check out the new resources, learn from case examples, watch demonstration videos and begin to improve your own practice in relation to the topics below: 1. 'Readiness for AAC' – supporting people to reflect on what they know and think about AAC 2. 'Joining in Conversation' – supporting people to express what areas are important to them e.g. talking outside, using social media, work or college etc. 3. 'Modes of Communication' - supporting people to reflection on how their particular AAC system allows them to maintain

independence, participate in deeper chat, have a laugh etc 4. ‘How Your AAC Works’ – supporting people to explore practical features of AAC such as portability, charging, layout etc 5. Access – supporting people to participate in Talking Mats when physically placing the option cards is difficult 6. Conversation Dynamics – reflect on pertinent issues when using Talking Mats with someone who uses AAC e.g. the impact of support staff on power dynamics.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

The new resources and training module were developed by partnerships between Talking Mats Limited and Ace Centre and between Talking Mats Limited and SCTCI. Not sure if that makes us sponsored or not but wanted to declare it as moving forward the training and resources will have costs attached.

9.4: Dynamic Assessment: Exploring the Case for Wider Distribution to Support Learners Living with Complex Communication Needs

Norrie, Chris - Author; Deckers, Stijn - Co-Author; van Balkom, Hans - Co-Author

Submission ID

39

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

In education, static test formats in common use - norm-referenced, and restricted to one assessment point - yield little or no evidence of how a child solves a problem set for them, or what support they might need from others (or from their environment) to learn. The presumption here is that the testee fully comprehends the task or challenge before them and can respond, unencumbered by personal traits, impairments or sensitivities, to deliver an accurate picture of their abilities or potential. For many - for example, young emerging communicators with complex communication needs who may be living with motoric, cognitive, sensory and/or communicative impairments - this presumption can prove flawed. In fact, for an array of subjective reasons explored in more detail in this presentation, it may skew the accuracy of such tests to the extent that the results are simply invalid as a predictor of learning potential - with negative implications for the child’s pedagogical support that may

prove longstanding. Dynamic assessment (DA), pioneered by researchers such as Feuerstein, Rand, and Hoffman; and Campione and Brown, has shown much promise as a means of circumventing many of the uncertainties introduced by a traditional static test approach. It sets out to achieve this by leveraging integrated training to accurately assess a student's responsiveness to learning opportunities. However, to date DA has seen limited uptake, and therefore, impact upon the practices of clinicians and educationalists. We seek to raise awareness of the advantages that may accrue from wider familiarity and availability of DA, with a particular focus on the field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and the potential gains for young learners with additional support needs, and the Team Around The Child (TATC).

References (Optional)

Bamford, C. K., Masso, S., Baker, E., & Ballard, K. J. (2022). Dynamic Assessment for Children With Communication Disorders: A Systematic Scoping Review and Framework. In American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology (Vol. 31, Issue 4, pp. 1878–1893). American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. https://doi.org/10.1044/2022_AJSLP-21-00349 Nazari, B. (2012). Teach-to-Test Instruction of Dynamic Assessment:A Critical Overview. Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature, 5(4), 56. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.468 Snell, M. (2002). Using dynamic assessment with learners who communicate nonsymbolically. Augmentative and Alternative communication, 18(3), 163-176. Tzuriel, D. (2013). Dynamic assessment of learning potential. Self-Directed Learning Oriented Assessments in the Asia-Pacific, 235–255. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4507-0_13 Tzuriel, D. (2021). Dynamic Assessment of Culturally Different Children and Children with Special Needs (pp. 167–206). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75692-5_7

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

9.5: A process for adapting a large-cell layout for Russian AAC user

Viera, Marc - Author; Paterson, Helen - Co-Author

Submission ID

37

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (RHN) is an independent medical charity that provides rehabilitation and long-term care to people with complex neurological disabilities. Some people benefit from a voice output communication aid whilst on their journey at RHN. It is not uncommon for people to speak a different language in public than they do with their families. In this professional experience paper, the authors share their process of creating a Cyrillic version of the FastTalker – LargeCell griduser in Smartbox's Grid3 software for a person to use to communicate with their immediate family. The AAC user benefited from a large-cell layout to communicate with their family as the standard layout was too challenging. The paper will examine what makes FastTalker – LargeCell more efficient than the typical so called 2-step or 2-hit keyboard. It will then demonstrate a relatively simple statistical approach to reproduce these same efficiencies in other alphabet-based languages using the creation of a Cyrillic version of 'FastTalker – LargeCell' as an example. Some thoughts on reducing the burden of future revisions of online grids will be shared. The authors also hope to facilitate a discussion on what types of letter distribution might be problematic using this approach, on how this process might be improved, and challenges with supporting languages other than English.

References (Optional)

LăpușneanuD. (2020) Master the Russian Alphabet Pronunciation. Available at https://www.mondly.com/blog/2020/03/26/learn-russian-alphabet-pronunciation/ (Accessed 17 April 2023) Smartbox Assistive Technology. (2023) FastTalker. Available at https://thinksmartbox.com/product/fast-talker/ (Accessed 17 April 2023) Stefan Trost Media. (2023) Alphabet and Character Frequency: Russian (Русский). Available at https://www.sttmedia.com/characterfrequency-russian (Accessed 17 April 2023) VieraM. (2023) FastTalker – LargeCell – Cyrillic. Available at https://grids.thinksmartbox.com/en/marc-41/be66f73e-f29d-4fe2-ab5c-501174e97ef0 (Accessed 17 April 2023)

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

9.6: Using AAC for active participation in music making.

Dunn, Sarah - Author

Submission ID

35

Format

Workshop

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

Sarah would like to share her knowledge of how Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) can be used to encourage active participation in music making for all ages and abilities. She combines professional and personal experience as a qualified music teacher, parent carer of an AAC user who is passionate about music, chair and founder of a non-profit organisation Accessible Inclusive Music (AIM) and current student at The University of Leeds studying a MA in Music and Wellbeing. She will share practical ways in which she has embraced AAC for her son to be able to actively participate in leisure time music and the impact this has on his personal and social wellbeing. Live and video demonstrations will be shared of how using recordable switches, Grid 3 software and eye harp software can positively support musical engagement for those who are pre- or non-verbal. This includes switch and eye gaze 'singing', selecting chords for composition, and improvisation using the 'eye harp'. There will also be additional signposting to musical opportunities for children and young people that welcome participants using AAC, within West Yorkshire and across the UK.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

9.7: Supporting Gestalt communicators who use AAC

Clay, Daisy - Author; Martin, Becky - Author

Submission ID

48

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

Speakers: Daisy Clay (SLT & Head of Content Development) and Becky Martin (SLT & Clinical AAC Specialist) 'I'll be back' and 'you're welcome' are phrases containing sounds which the majority of people process in chunks, or as gestalts, but what about the people who process everything they hear in chunks? How do they learn language? How can we support them best with AAC? Becky and Daisy will explore natural language acquisition and the way in which this happens for a Gestalt language processor. They will also provide practical ideas on how you can support a Gestalt Language processor who uses AAC. The talk is designed for beginners and is intended to share useful tips to get you thinking.

- Find out more about language processing models
- Understand how Gestalt and Analytical language processing differ
- Gather practical tips and adaptions to support a Gestalt AAC user
- The floor is yours! Ask clarifying questions to guide your understanding and successfully

implement what you learn
In this talk we will use Grid AAC software to demonstrate the concepts covered, however the content can be applied to other AAC systems.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

Daisy and Becky are employees of Smartbox Assistive Technology.

9.8: Use of Eye-Gaze Feedback by AAC Professionals – Findings from a Thematic Analysis

Griffiths, Tom - Author; Souto, David - Author; Judge, Simon - Author

Submission ID

43

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Eye-gaze technology can play a vital role in enabling access to communication for users with a wide range of disabilities. Research demonstrates the critical importance of careful assessment by skilled professionals in the provision of this technology (Perfect et al., 2020; Karlsson et al., 2021). Assessment is often contingent upon professionals' use and interpretation of feedback provided by the devices and their installed software, which offer information on a users' calibration, positioning and aspects of their performance during use. However it has been observed that application of such feedback is dependent on its presentation and its understanding by those using it (Venker and Kover, 2015). This session will report preliminary analysis from a focus group study conducted with two groups of AAC professionals, which sought to understand how they receive, interpret and apply different feedback types commonly provided by eye-gaze systems and software. The focus groups centred around discussion of five different feedback types: calibration plots, positioning guides, heatmaps, scan paths and live images of the users' eyes. Professionals taking part ranged from daily users of the technology to those working in highly specialised contexts. A thematic analysis of the data collected from these focus groups was then undertaken by the research team, resulting in a range of themes and subthemes related to the presentation, availability and interpretation of feedback, as well as how it is applied by professionals. Delegates attending this session will gain an understanding of the themes identified, the

potential areas for improvement and some of the implications for feedback design. The presentation will be supported by quotes from the focus group participants, and presenters will highlight some key areas for discussion.

References (Optional)

Karlsson, P. et al. (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), p. 63. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1186/s12883-021-02077-z. Perfect, E. et al. (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), pp. 145–159. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17518423.2019.1600066. Venker, C.E. and Kover, S.T. (2015) 'An Open Conversation on Using Eye-Gaze Methods in Studies of Neurodevelopmental Disorders', Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 58(6), pp. 1719–1732. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1044/2015_JSLHR-L-14-0304.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

9.9: Communication with Affective Technology in adults with Complex Communication Needs

Vaillant, Emma - Author; Wolters-Leermakers, Nina - Co-Author; Bak, Michelle - Co-Author; van Dijk, Manuela - Co-Author; Edelbroek-Muller, Liza - Co-Author; Damen, Saskia - Co-Author

Submission ID

34

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The positive effects of affective technology, i.e. social robots, have been investigated in older people with dementia and individuals with visual problems and intellectual disabilities. The majority of these studies focus on the effect of social robots on quality of life. However, potential effects of social robots on communicative interaction in individuals with Complex Communication Needs (i.e. individuals with multiple disabilities like deafblindness or an intellectual and auditory disability) have not yet been investigated. This study aims to investigate the effects of affective technology on the amount and type of communication in

adults with CCN. Furthermore, the most optimal way to present affective technology to the individual is investigated. Twelve adults with CCN who live at residential locations of Royal Kentalis participated. The affective technology used in this study consists of a red-haired robotic cat. Although this robotic cat is relatively limited in its functionalities, it reacts to petting through catlike sounds and movements. The study consists of four stages; each stage's participants are filmed twice a week. During the first stage of three weeks, baseline measurements are conducted: the participants are filmed without the use of affective technology. During the next stages, affective technology is presented to the participants. It is presented with a short introduction during stages 2 and 4 and a longer introduction (a short story with a matching object) during stage 3. The amount and type of communicative behaviour of the participants are labelled and counted using personalized communication schemes (Wolters-Leermakers et al., accepted for publication; Jones et al., 2015). Currently, data collection is being conducted; the first results will be presented during the conference. Furthermore, the study design, including the use of personalized coding schemes and the use of affective technology in research with participants with CCN, will be discussed more elaborately during the conference.

References (Optional)

Jones, C., Sung, B., & Moyle, W. (2015). Assessing engagement in people with dementia: a new approach to assessment using video analysis. Archives of psychiatric nursing, 29(6), 377-382. Wolters-Leermakers, N., Wingerden, E. van, Gerkema-Nijhof, R., & Balkom, H. van (accepted for publication). Sensory Enhanced Interactive Storytelling-Technique (SEIST): supporting active communication through short, multimodal narratives. International journal of disability, development and education.

Level

Introductory Session

Age Group

Adult

Plenary: A voice was all I needed.

Omar, ABDI - Author

Submission ID

98

Format

Platform

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

In this session, Abdi Omar will tell how a voice changed his perception of life despite having a disability. Not knowing what he wants from life to having a limitless mindset and running

his own business. Abdi Omar will share how AAC changed his life and more importantly his future.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

P7: The Positive AAC Framework

Robinson, Helen - Author

Submission ID

36

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The Positive AAC Framework has been developed to help practitioners who support AAC users. The framework presents six strands which contribute towards a positive experience of using AAC. These strands are: Preferences, Provision, People, Pride, Planning, Practice & Play. Each strand has four elements for consideration and two value statements. The four elements in each strand offer topics for consideration when supporting an AAC user. The two value statements for each strand offer impactful phrases with the aim of driving home the key message of that strand. The 'preferences' strand has previously been shared via social media as 'the four Ps of AAC' (Person, paper, Power and Partner) and received much interest from AAC users and practitioners, having being used in presentations such as the MNDA Stephen Hawking Annual Lecture delivered by Stephen Bloch last year. In response to the popularity of the four P's model, I have engaged with AAC users, family members and practitioners to build on this concept and develop the Positive AAC framework. Each of the six strands is displayed as a graphic with minimal text and therefore is well suited to a poster presentation. I hope that the framework will encourage AAC practitioners to consider the many elements that interact to create a positive experience of using AAC, and think beyond the medical model of assessment and provision to reflect on elements which are often overlooked, such as identity, advocacy and belonging. The framework may be referenced as a whole or as individual strands. The framework has been developed over two years and feel the Communication Matters Conference would be an appropriate place to share it and receive feedback from the AAC community.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

P8: Model of Support for AAC Communication Partners

Boyle, Melanie - Author; Lennon, Kathleen - Co-Author

Submission ID

40

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore parents' perceptions of barriers to professional support in use of and implementation of AAC. An initial literature search of refereed papers and review of professional and charity websites was conducted. An online questionnaire posted with permission onto Facebook pages of charities and special interest group sites attracted responses from 75 parents globally in 13 countries. From these respondents 3 focus groups were held on Zoom. In addition 17 interviews were held via Zoom with professionals working in mainstream and special needs schools, charities and both publicly and privately run speech and language therapy practices. Quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted. Key findings were that a global shortage of speech and language therapists together with an increased life expectancy for older people and advances in scientific identification of genetic syndromes limits the range of professional support that is available for non-verbal and complex communication needs individuals who could benefit from AAC input. Alarmingly 1 out of every 5 parents surveyed had no access to AAC support for their child. In addition 11 out of 12 schools and organisations had no continual professional development training in AAC available. As 53% of parents surveyed felt not satisfied and 32% felt frustrated there appears to be an urgent need to re-think the current delivery of AAC support offered to parents. Without that these parents and their non verbal or complex communication needs family members continue to be marginalised.

References (Optional)

Creer, S., Enderby, P., Judge, S. and John, A. (2016), Prevalence of people who could benefit from augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in the UK: determining the need. International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders, 51: 639-653. https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12235 Judge, S., Murray, J., Lynch, Y., Meredith, S., Moulam, L., Randall, N. et al. (2023) Attributes of communication aids as described by those supporting children and young people with AAC. International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders, 58, 910– 928. https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12833 RCSLT (2022) Written evidence submitted by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (EPW0024)

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

Details of sponsorship

This research was carried for customer discovery to explore what potential customers were looking for in terms of AAC support.

P9: Assessing language comprehension and cognition using alternative response modalities

Stadskleiv, Kristine - Author; Murray, Janice - Author; Latham, Katy - Author; Spanne, Kristina Tufteskog - Co-Author; Sætre, Karen - Co-Author; Fraas, Anna - Co-Author

Submission ID

46

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

Children and adults using Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) comprise a heterogeneous group. To implement the AAC solution that best fits an individual's needs and resources, an assessment of cognition and language is recommended (Stadskleiv 2015). Assessments with standardized tests are challenging when the individual has severe speech and motor impairments. Tests with a multiple-choice format may be applied, but need to be adapted so that individuals unable to point with a finger can indicate the answer in an alternative way. The most common alternative response modes are partner assisted scanning (PAS) and eye-gaze pointing (EP). It has been shown that using alternative response modes do not influence test results (Kurmanaviciute and Stadskleiv 2017), but the assessments have been done by trained professionals. The aim of our study was therefore to investigate if novel practitioners are able to use PAS and EP. Specifically, we investigated numbers of errors made during assessment and which format of instruction (written or video) resulted in fewest errors. The participants were 40 masters students of special needs education trained in assessment, who worked in dyads during the assessment, and 4 masters students observing the assessment. There were two students observing the assessment dyads and recording type and number of errors independently of each other. The number of errors made by the assessors varied between dyads, from zero to 60, but the majority made very few errors. The students observing the dyads were in high agreement about the average number of errors made, M=16.8 (21.2) vs 15.3 (17.7), t=-0.26, p=.798. There was no statistically significant difference that could be related to alternative response

mode (PAS versus EP) or instructional mode (video versus film). The study confirms that alternative modes of responding to test items can be successfully taught to novel practitioners.

References (Optional)

Kurmanaviciute, R., & Stadskleiv, K. (2017). Assessment of verbal comprehension and non-verbal reasoning when standard response mode is challenging: A comparison of different response modes and an exploration of their clinical usefulness. Cogent Psychology, 4(1), 1275416. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2016.1275416 Stadskleiv, K. (2015). Kartlegging [Assessment]. In K.-A. B. Næss & A. V. Karlsen (Eds.), God kommunikasjon med ASK-brukere [Good communication with AAC-users] (pp. 73–118). Fagbokforlaget.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

P10: AAC User Focus Group

Sharples, Andrea - Author; Murphy Mann, Saffron - Co-Author; Hewson, Helen - Co-Author; Moulam, Beth - Co-Author

Submission ID

51

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Personal Stories and Preferences

Abstract

At Communication Matters, the mission statement includes "supporting people who use AAC in their basic human right to communicate, be included and heard in an equitable society". The AAC User Focus Group was begun during lockdown and continues to move forward to ensure that AAC users are at the heart of the organisation and can share their views and influence the activities of Communication Matters. A number of AAC users and Communication Matters trustees regularly meet as a focus group to discuss decisions being considered by the trustees and also to bring issues from AAC users to the trustees. The focus group has been a success for both AAC users and Communication Matters and goes from strength to strength. This poster will reflect on the process of the group being established, highlight issues discussed in the meetings, and highlight the influence of the focus group on Communication Matters and some of the successes achieved. This poster provides information for those who have not attend the AAC User Group to date and to

share information with the vision that more AAC Users will become regular attendees to the group.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Adult

P11: A Recipe For Success - Exploring Good Practice Ideas For AAC Implementation

McCormack, Angela - Author

Submission ID

56

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Clinical and Professional Experience

Abstract

A crucial part of AAC provision is effective training and implementation for AAC users, families, support team and local services. At Ace Centre, one of the regional NHS Specialised AAC services, our clinical team have taken a fresh look at the implementation process and created a bank of resources to make this more effective and less time consuming to prepare. We consider the topics the resources should cover, for example, aided language input, communication partner skills. We take into account the person the resource is aimed at, distinguishing detailed academic sources from simplified articles or video tutorials. We select resources to meet the needs of different client groups and environments. For example, a schoolchild and an elderly adult would need quite different information and approaches. For ease of use our new repository was confined to the most popular documents and videos in each topic area. A collection of presentation templates was produced to cover key points within AAC topics. Vocabulary specific presentations were included, containing information from supplier websites. This curated resource bank helps our clinical team to assemble an implementation pack bespoke for the client, containing relevant and easily accessible information. The pack is provided to all participants for later reference. By planning for the session in advance, we can collaborate closely with our client's team and plan content taking all known, or anticipated, factors into account. Our more structured approach to implementation proves effective and makes for easier transfer of information to our clients, families, and local teams. This paper will take a detailed look at our ingredients and method. Sharing our recipe will also provide opportunities for discussion and questions about AAC implementation.

Level

General Session

Age Group

All Ages

P12: Priority Number 4 from The Top Ten UK research priorities for interventions in childhood neurological disorders - 'What are the most effective strategies to support communication in children and young people with neurological conditions?' (e.g. use of high and low technology augmentative alternative communication (AAC) or improving speech intelligibility).

Martin, Catherine - Author

Submission ID

109

Format

Poster

Submission Topic

Best Research Evidence

Abstract

The British Paediatric Neurology Association and James Lind Alliance formed a priority setting partnership to set research priorities with regard to interventions in children and young people with neurological conditions and address interventions that may improve quality of life in parallel. The partnership involved patients, carers and the public to agree the most important research priorities for children with neurological conditions at this time. I am the champion for Research priority 4, which is 'What are the most effective strategies to support communication in children and young people with neurological conditions? (e.g. use of high and low technology augmentative alternative communication (AAC) or improving speech intelligibility)' and I'm keen to raise awareness of the need to encourage research in this area. This priority is of interest to delegates at CM as it relates to the need for AAC for these children and for research about the most effective AAC systems, techniques, strategies for learning language via AAC etc. This poster will display the background to the priority setting and the BPNA and James Lind Alliance. It will showcase priority 4 and give examples of some of the research questions that people are currently looking at but also encourage delegates at the conference to put forward their own ideas. I plan to share these ideas with practitioners, families and the research community and continue to raise the profile and importance of research in this field. I hope the poster will start delegates talking about the questions that they hope research can answer as well as inspire people to get involved in their own research.

References (Optional)

Cross, H., Lim, M. & Steering group (2021) The Top Ten UK research priorities for interventions in childhood neurological disorders: A British Paediatric Neurology Association and James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership [online] Available at: https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/childhood-neurological-conditions/downloads/Childhood-Neurological-Conditions-PSP-Final-Report.pdf Accessed: 22nd June 2023.

Level

General Session

Age Group

Child