



Augmentative and Alternative Communication: One Size Fits One

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Presenter Disclosure

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Disclosure of Commercial Support

- This program has not received any financial support in the form of an educational grant.
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Mitigating Potential Bias

- The information presented in this CME program is based on recent information that is explicitly evidence based.

AAC: One Size Fits One

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the impact of AAC
- Recognize who could benefit from AAC assessment
- Identify 3 key strategies to be a better communication partner to a person who uses AAC

The A's in AAC

Augmentative

- Used by someone whose speech is not clearly understood by all people
- To improve communication
- To make it more than it was

Alternative

- Replaces speech
- Replaces handwriting

AAC in Ontario

- 27 clinics
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Assistive Devices Program
- Centralized Equipment Pool and leasing program
- Hotel Dieu Shaver is newest clinic; February 28, 2014
- Most clinics are pediatric
- Nine of the 27 clinics have an adult mandate
- Provincial shortage of AAC service for people over 18

AAC at HDS

Multidisciplinary team of SLP, OT, CDA, Equipment Coordinator and Nurse provides:

- Assessment
- Assistive technology prescription
- Training for the person using AAC
- Training for communication partners
- Clients are seen in our clinic or in the community
 - Personal home
 - Long Term Care
 - Group home
 - Hospital, Hospice or ICU

Who can benefit from AAC?

- Any adult who needs compensatory solutions for complex communication needs
- Adults who have grown up using AAC and have graduated from pediatric AAC services
- People with a diagnoses of ALS, MS, ABI, Aphasia, Autism, etc.
- Anyone whose speech does not meet their daily communication needs
- Anyone lacking functional handwriting due to a physical disability

Case Examples

Application and impact of AAC for a person who has:

- Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Aphasia

Thomas has Cerebral Palsy



- No functional movement of hands, arms, legs
- No functional speech, understands language
- Eye gaze as a strength
- Not always comfortable in wheelchair

AAC Solutions at home

Eye gaze communication system

- Rolling stand for use in bed
- Rolling stand for recliner chair
- Can attach to wheelchair
- Using eyes as mouse
- Symbol based language system that can grow for long term
- Access to games and music
- Access to accessible apps (YouTube)
- Access to camera and selfies



Impact of AAC

- Health
- Pain Management
- Inclusion
- Lifelong Learning

Take Home Message

Key partner strategy:

- Talk Directly to the person who uses AAC, not their caregiver
- Remember communication begins with saying, “Hello!”



John has ALS

- John was diagnosed in June 2014 with ALS
- Message banking to prepare for future voice loss
- Amplification of voice when he couldn't be heard
- Eye gaze training with a computer for banking and twitter
- Developed a way to get attention for use with Bi-Pap
- Developed a code using facial movement to signal yes
- Developed a way to say frequent messages for care
- Developed a way to spell any and every message
- Trained friends, family and nurses

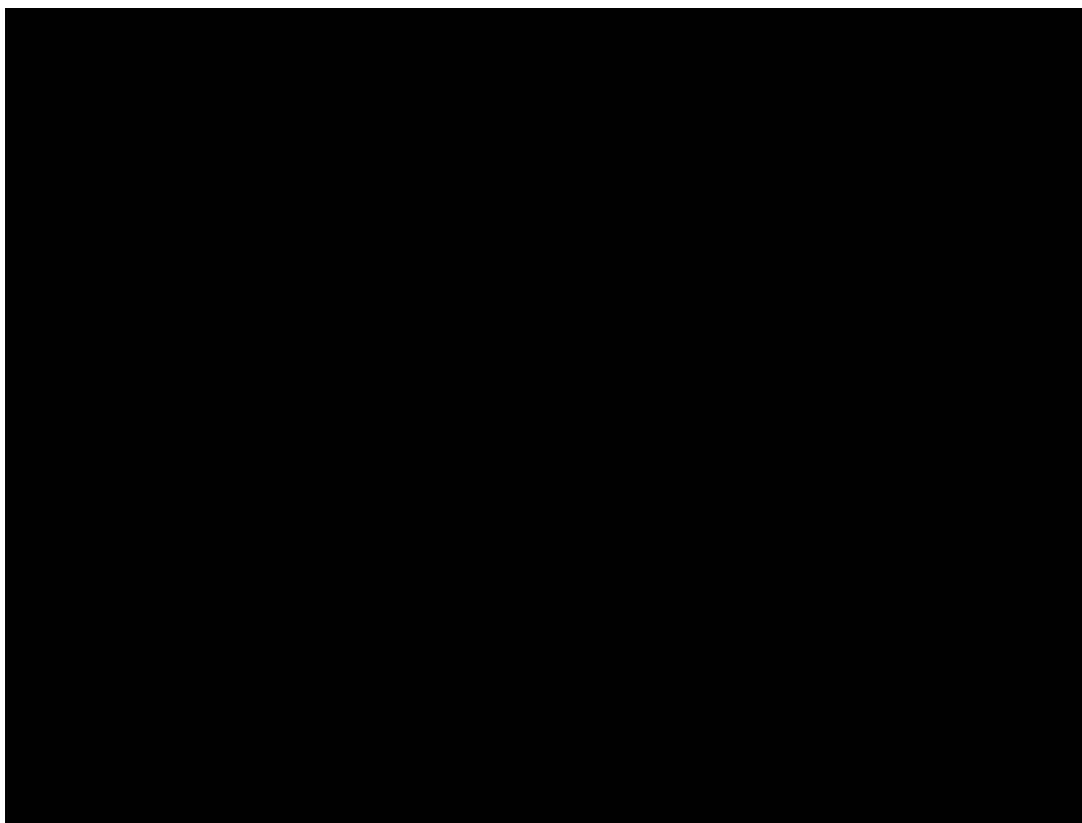
Partner Assisted Scanning

A	B	C	D	BACK SPACE (MISTAKE)	SPACE
E	F	G	H	NUMBERS #	START OVER
YES	I	J	K	L	M
	0	1	2	3	4
	O	P	Q _u	R	S
	6	7	8	9	10
	U	V	W	X	Y
	11	12	:00	:15	:30
					Z
					:45

NO

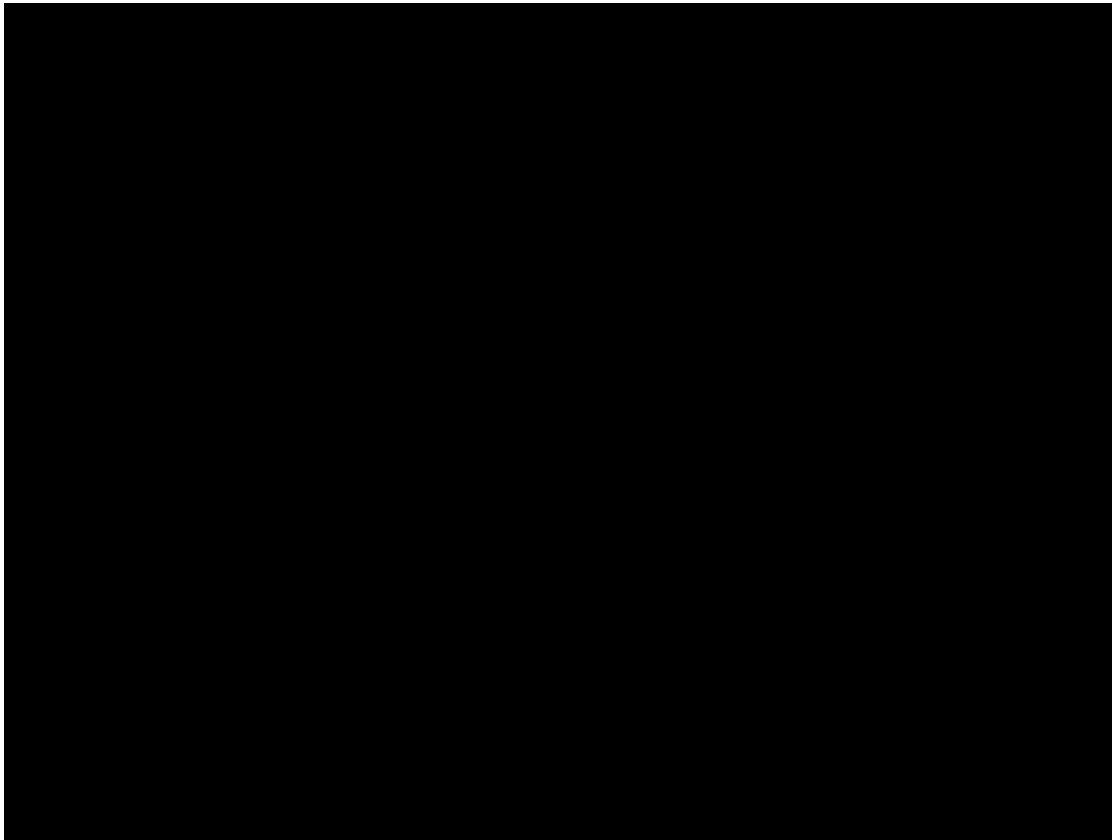
John directing care

A	B	C	D	BACK SPACE (MISTAKE)	SPACE
E	F	G	H	NUMBERS #	START OVER
I ₀	J ₁	K ₂	L ₃	M ₄	N ₅
O ₆	P ₇	Q ₈	R ₉	S ₁₀	T _{()00}
U ₁₁	V ₁₂	W _{:00}	X _{:15}	Y _{:30}	Z _{:45}



A	B	C	D	BACK SPACE (MISTAKE)	SPACE
E	F	G	H	NUMBERS #	START OVER
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U ₁₁	V ₁₂	W _{:00}	X _{:15}	Y _{:30}	Z _{:45}

John having fun



Impact of AAC

- Remain at home
- Engaged in family life
- In control of care

Take Home Message

Key partner strategy:

- Communication is most successful when partners know the signals used by the person with ALS
- Develop clear signals for:
 - 1 yes
 - 2 no
 - 3 maybe/not sure/something else

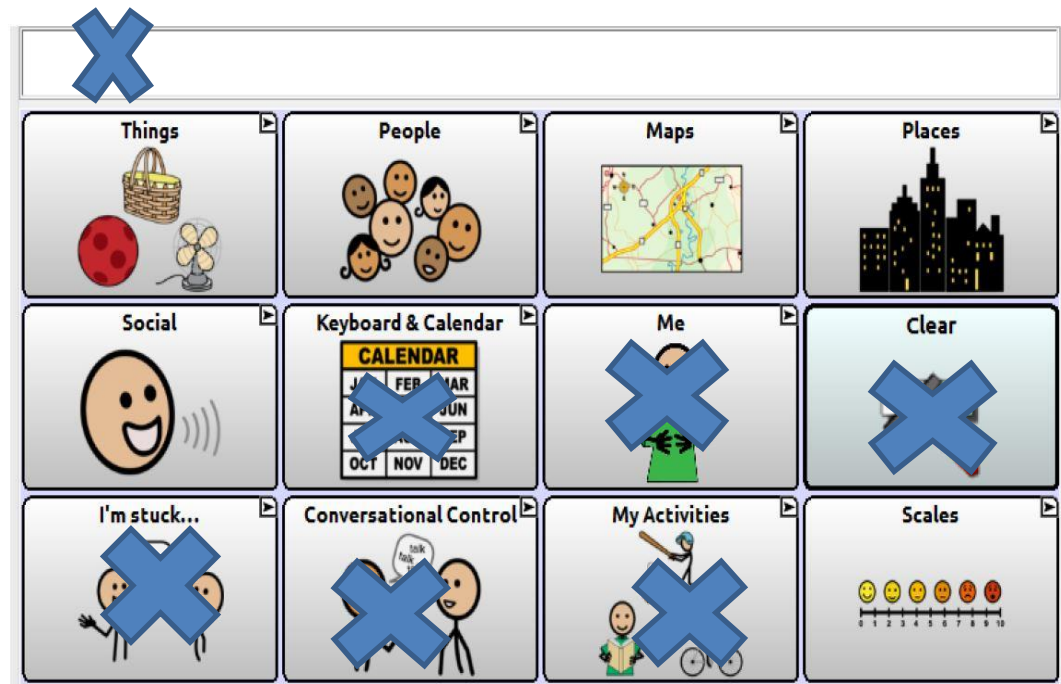
Sam has Aphasia

- Cerebral hemorrhage at age 42
- Right hemiplegia, functionally walks, has scooter
- Currently has many ways of communicating (some speech, writing, drawing, gesturing and sound effects)
- Unmet communication goals
- Speech alone cannot meet needs = augmentative communication

Language Solution

Feature Matching

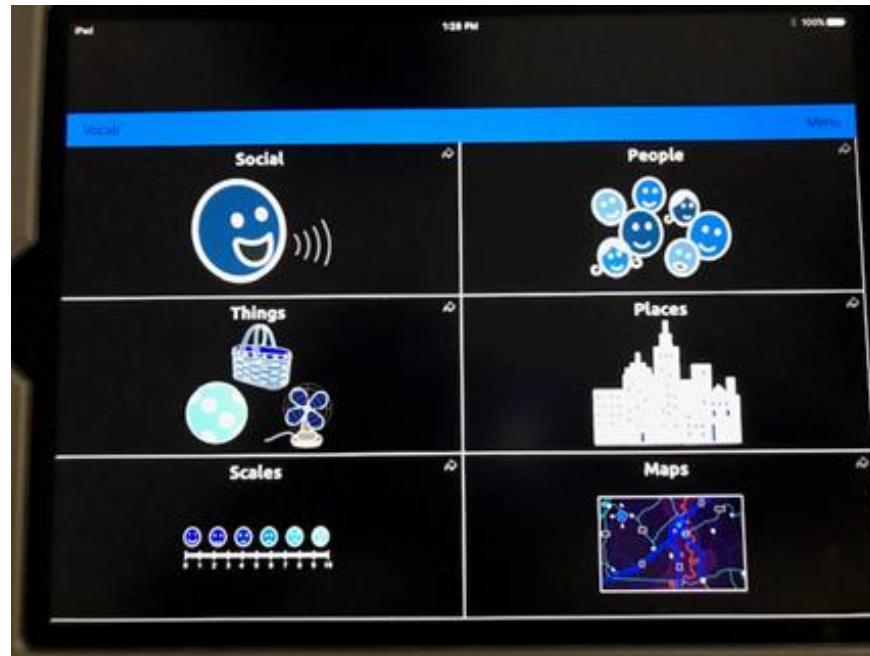
- Compensate for literacy challenge
- Symbol support for language
- Speech output
- Relevant messages



Visual Solution

Display accommodations

- Increase size of print
- Invert colour
- Bold print



Physical Solution

- Arm band
- Worn on weak arm
- Touch messages with left hand
- Increase portability



Impact of AAC

Augmentative means to make bigger...

- Increase number of turns in conversation
- Increase in number of communication partners
- Increased initiation of conversation
- Increased self advocacy
- Getting the right Tim Horton's order every time!!



Take Home Message

Key partner strategy:

- A brief interaction with someone using AAC can take longer than with a speaking person
- Try to allow extra time and wait for a response when you ask a question



Comfort. Care. Hope.

3 Key Strategies

1. Allow extra time
2. Talk directly to the person who uses AAC
3. Know the AAC user's communication signals



<http://www.cdacanada.com/>



Thank you & Questions

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