

AAC and Difficult Conversations: A Practical Course for Speech Language Pathologists

Presented by: Teresa Thompson, MA CCC-SLP
teresa.thompson@lingraphica.com

- I. Defining Difficult Conversations and the SLPs Role
- II. Scope of Practice
- III. Tips for Difficult Conversations
 - a. Tips and Tricks from the Spice Institute
 - b. Review of Medical Models for Difficult Conversations
 - i. ABCDE
 - ii. SPIKE
 - iii. SEQUE
- IV. Use Your AAC Resources
 - a. Light Tech AAC
 - i. Interest Inventory
 - ii. Mental Health Communication Board
 - iii. Depression Intensity Scale Circles
 - iv. Personal Health Questionnaire (Picture Supported)
 - v. Other
 - b. High Tech AAC: Customized examples
- V. Special Topics
 - a. Abuse, self-advocacy and access to justice system

- i. Prevalence of abuse
 - ii. Strategies to reduce risk
 - iii. Vocabulary Considerations
 - iv. Access to justice system and courtroom accommodations
 - v. Excerpts of AAC User Insights
 - vi. Examples: Light Tech tools and High Tech AAC customizations
- b. Intimacy
 - i. Impact of Communication Challenges on:
 - 1. Intimacy
 - 2. Relationships
 - 3. Sex Education
 - ii. Excerpts of AAC User Insights
 - iii. Examples: Light Tech tools and High Tech AAC customizations
- c. End of Life Decisions and Care
 - i. Framework for End of Life Issues
 - ii. Considerations:
 - 1. Gathering Information: Treatment options and prognosis
 - 2. Medical decision making and communication of Advance Directives
 - 3. Funeral Planning
 - iii. Excerpts of AAC User Insights
 - iv. Examples: Light Tech tools and High Tech AAC customizations

VI. Case Studies: Group Discussion and Problem-Solving

VII. Conclusion/Questions and Answers

VIII. References (as of 3/1/24)

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2016). *Scope of practice for speech-language pathology*. www.asha.org/policy

Back, A., Bauer-Wu, S., Rushton, C. & Halifax, J. Compassionate silence in the patient-clinician encounter: a contemplative approach. *Journal of palliative medicine*. 2009; 12: 1113-1117.

Baggs, M. (2012, June 25). Communication page I used to handle that invasive woman I met. Ballastexistenz.

<https://ballastexistenz.wordpress.com/2012/06/25/communication-page-i-used-to-handle-that-invasive-woman-i-met/>

Ballan, M. & Freyer, M. Intimate Partner Violence and Women With Disabilities: The Role of Speech-Language Pathologists. *Am J Speech Lang Pathol*. 2019; 28:1692-1697.

Blake Huer, M & Threats, T. Shared Responsibilities for Full Participation in Society: Planning Further Integration of the ICF into Augmentative and Alternative Communication. *Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication*. 2016; 1(3): 83-93

Blake Huer, M. & Yaniv, K. Access to Justice: An SLP's Guide to Helping Patients with Complex Communication Needs Voice Their Case. *The ASHA Leader*. 2006; 11(17)
<https://doi.org/10.1044/leader.FTR1.11172006.6>

Bryen, D., Chung, Y. & Lever, S. What You Might Not Find in a Typical Transition Plan!

Some Important Lessons From Adults Who Rely on Augmentative and Alternative Communication. *Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication*. 2010; 19(2): 32-40.

Cullen, G. The Meaning of Words and Why They Matter During End-of-Life Conversations. *Fed Pract*. 2021; 38(11): 497-500.

Denome, D. (2020, June 14). How do you symbolize intimacy? For many AAC programs, not particularly well. mumblings from an autistic fairy.
<https://donnie.lgbt/2020/06/14/how-do-you-symbolize-intimacy-for-many-aac-programs-not-particularly-well/>

Fried-Oken, M. & Bardach, L. End-of-Life Issues for People Who Use AAC. *Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication*. 2005; 14(3): 15-19
<https://doi.org/10.1044/aac14.3.15>

Hemsley, B. & Balandin, S. (2003). Disability, dysphagia, and complex communication needs: Making room for communication in ethical decisions about dysphagia. *Advances in Speech Language Pathology*. 2003; 5(2): 125-129.

Kroenke K, Spitzer R.L. & Williams, J.B. The PHQ-9: validity of a brief depression severity measure. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2001;16(9):606-613.

Morin, A. (2015, April, 7), Why You're Stronger Than You Think. *Psychology Today*.

Retrieved 2/20/24 from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/why-youre-stronger-you-think>

Radtke, J., Baumann, B., Garrett, K., & Happ, M. Listening to the voiceless patient: case reports in assisted communication in the intensive care unit. *Journal of palliative medicine*. 2011; 14(6): 791–795. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jpm.2010.0313>

Stone, D., Patton, B., Heen, S. (2010), *Difficult Conversations: How To Discuss What Matters Most*. Penguin Books.

Svarovsky, T. Having Difficult Conversations: The Advanced Practitioner’s Role. *J Adv Pract Oncol*. 2013; 4(1): 47-52.

The Spice Institute. (2024). Tips & tricks for comfortable intimacy discussions. <https://www.spiceinstitute.org/freeguides>

Turner-Stokes, L., Kalmus, M., Hirani, D. & Clegg, F. The Depression Intensity Scale Circles (DISCs): a first evaluation of a simple assessment tool for depression in the context of brain injury. *Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry*. 2005; 76(9): 1273-1278.

Vaynshtok, J. (2019, March 11). How to Approach Difficult Conversations With Patients and Family Members. *The ASHA Leader Live*. <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/how-to-approach-difficult-conversations-with-patients-and-family-members/full/>

Wilcox, S. & Varpio, L. Finding Comfort in the Discomfort of Difficult Conversations with Military Patients. *Military Medicine*. 2019; 184(11-12): e590-e593. <https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/usz137>