

AAC and Difficult Conversations:

A Practical Course for Speech-Language Pathologists



1



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2

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Learning Objectives

- Define difficult conversations
- Identify the SLP's role in facilitating difficult conversations
- Identify two factors that increase risk of abuse for AAC users
- Discuss two scenarios where AAC was successfully utilized to facilitate a difficult conversation



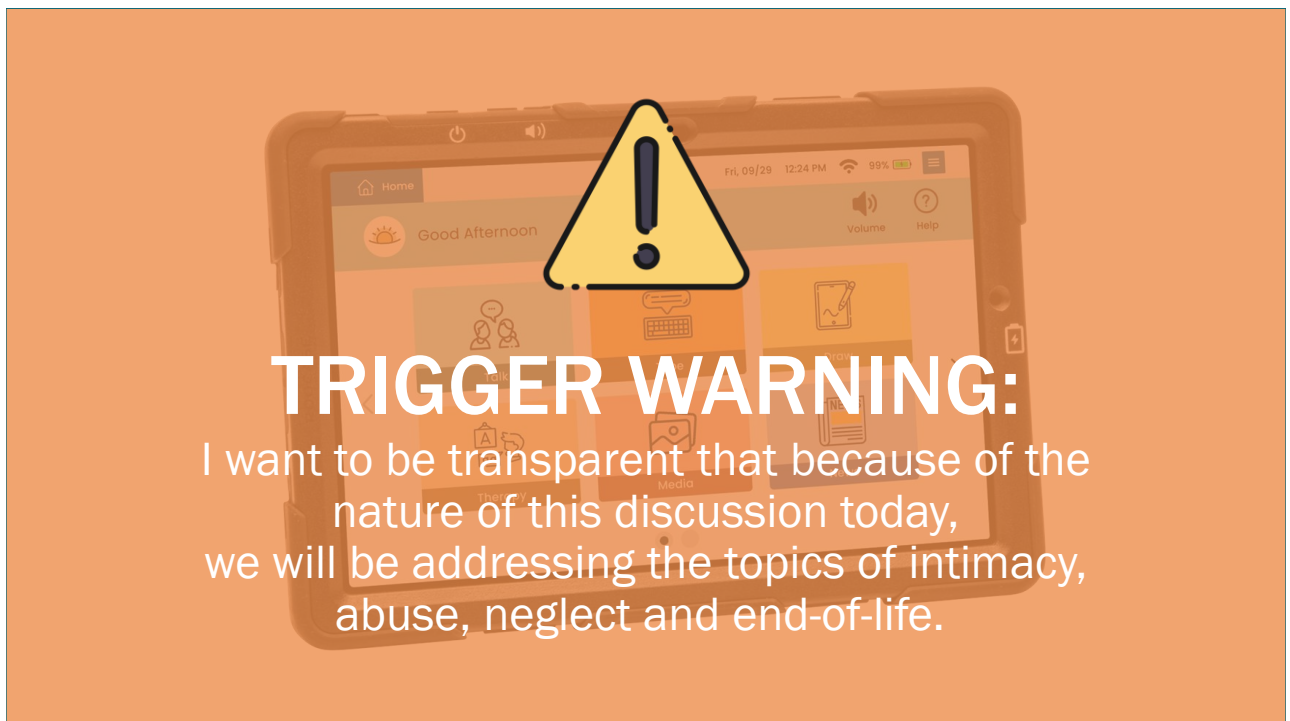
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Agenda

- Client Profiles
- Defining Difficult Conversations and the SLPs Role
- Tips for Difficult Conversations
- Use Your Resources
- Special Topics
- Case Studies
- Q&A



5



TRIGGER WARNING:
I want to be transparent that because of the nature of this discussion today, we will be addressing the topics of intimacy, abuse, neglect and end-of-life.

6

Client Profiles



7

“My client is 23 and gay. He really wants to be in a relationship and wants the words to meet and connect with others easily accessible on his AAC device.”



8

“ My client wants pick up lines programmed into his device so that he can talk to women at bars. ”

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“ Marge has Parkinson’s Disease and wants to donate her brain to science. She has researched everything but needs to let her doctor and family know. She needs the words to do this added to her device. ”

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“Mr. Smith misses being intimate with his wife since his stroke.”

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“My client has a court hearing coming up for a domestic violence case and needs to use her device to communicate.”

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“ My client’s wife keeps bringing up a topic my client is clearly sensitive about, but he doesn’t have the words to tell her how he feels. ”



13

Defining Difficult Conversations and the SLPs' Role



14

What is a “Difficult Conversation?”

Difficult conversations are anything an individual finds hard to talk about.

Any topic that makes us:

- Feel vulnerable
- Implicates our self-esteem
- Has uncertain outcomes
- Care deeply

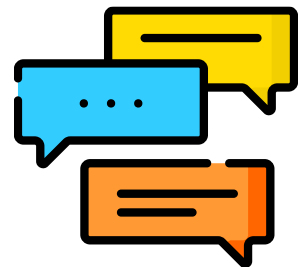


Stone et al, 2010

15

Topics May Include:

- End-of-life
- Relationships
- Intimacy
- Legal
- Abuse/Neglect
- Hygiene
- Medical procedures
- Conflict
- Religious beliefs
- Racial disparities
- Housing insecurity
- Disability rights
- Inclusion
- Transitions



16

Time to Share!



- Share some examples of difficult conversations you've had in your life or with clients
 - Raise your hand or text confidentially to (732)743-8847



17

ASHA Scope of Practice

“The role of the SLP in the counseling process includes interactions related to emotional reactions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that result from living with the communication disorder, feeding and swallowing disorder, or related disorders.”

- Two of the activities listed:
 - provide support and/or peer-to-peer groups for individuals with disorders and their families
 - provide individuals and families with skills that enable them to become self-advocates



ASHA, 2016

18

Communication Bill of Rights

Fundamental communication rights:

- Interact socially, maintain closeness, and build relationships
- Make comments/share opinions
- Express personal preferences/feelings
- Request/reject desired objects, actions, events, or choices
- Make choices from meaningful alternatives
- Access interventions/supports that improve communication
- Have access to functioning AAC/other AT services and devices at all times



Brady et al, 2016

19

World Health Organization



Assistive technology:

- Enables people to live healthy, productive, independent, and dignified lives

Without assistive technology:

- Exclusion and isolation



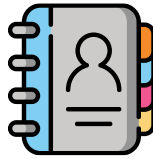
World Health Organization, 2018

20

Types of AAC



No Tech



Light Tech



High Tech



21

No Tech Communication



- Gestures
- Facial expressions and body language
- Establish if there is a reliable Y/N response
 - Head nod/shake
 - Thumbs up/Thumbs down
- Ask yes/no questions
- Description of a word or use of synonym



22

Tips for Difficult Conversations



25

How do medical providers make a conversation more difficult?

What is a “Difficult Conversation”?

Those in which the provider displays a lack of:

- Knowledge
- Confidence
- Skill
- Comfort to adequately address particular topics with clients



Wilcox et al, 2019

26

AAC users surveyed on experiences communicating with medical providers

- Almost ALL participants described feeling that their physicians were rushed/they didn't have enough time to communicate.
 - Resulted in insufficient discussion of their concerns and questions.
- EVERY participant reported experiences of physicians and other providers making inappropriate assumptions about them, typically about their cognitive abilities.
- Caregivers often spoken to first
 - Some physicians seemed to prefer talking with the caregiver
 - Negative impact on patient-provider relationship and building rapport
- Several participants reported physician moving on to a different topic before they had finished composing their message



Morris et al, 2013

27

Perspectives from verbal communicators: Veterans and service members

Importance of Provider Communication

- Majority of service members who acknowledge a mental health problem are not interested in receiving professional help due to:
 - Poor patient-provider communication
 - Lack of Trust
 - Embarrassment
- Female Veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma or intimate partner violence often don't seek treatment due to providers not being well-versed in trauma-sensitive communication



Wilcox et al, 2019

28

Models for Difficult Conversations

ABCDE

SPIKES

NURSE



29

ABCDE Model

- Advance Preparation
- Build Therapeutic Relationship
- Communicate Well
- Deal with Patient and Family Reactions
- Encourage/Validate Emotions



Vaynshtok, 2019

30

SPIKES Model

- Setup
- Perception
- Invitation
- Knowledge
- Empathy
- Summary and Strategy



Svarovsky, 2013

31

NURSE Model

- Naming
- Understanding
- Respecting
- Supporting
- Exploring



Svarovsky, 2013

32

Ask for Permission

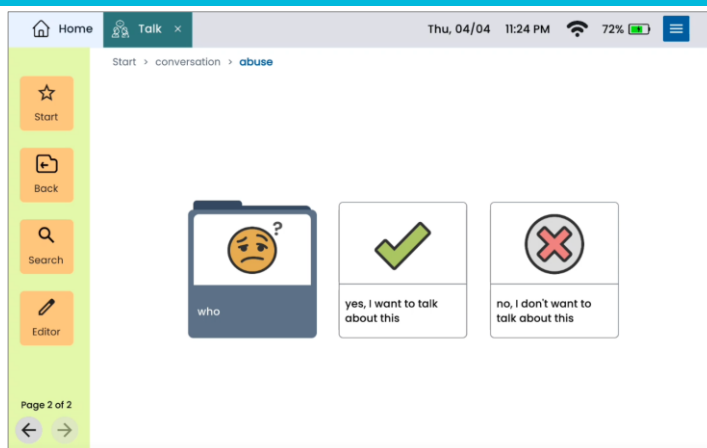


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33

Permission



34

Recognize When You Are Not the Right Person For the Job.

If the topic makes you uncomfortable, you could still be the right person for the job.

If YOU bringing up the topic would make THEM uncomfortable, you may not be the right person for the job.



35

Tips

- Give your client an easy way in – bring up issues they may be having
 - Takes stigma off
 - Allows for more reflection from client
- Pause frequently
- Continuously seek consent



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Tips

- Make – and break – eye contact
- Practice your judgement free face
- Read up on a diversity of topics, especially those not aligned with your lifestyle/interests
- Be confident – this will make your client more comfortable
- Have fun getting to know your client better



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“ Don't feel like you need to do this with your client all at once. Important conversations often happen in small bites, not big meals. ”
– Laura Wolford PhD, MS CCC-SLP



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Silence

- “Some of the most valuable lessons, thoughts and ideas have come from...moments of silence that have led to important and powerful conversations with patients and family members”
– Jody Vaynshtok MS CCC-SLP
- “Silence can be enriching, comforting, affirming, and safe. Silence can also be used to allow the patient and the clinician time for understanding and mutual respect”
– Back et al



Vaynshtok, 2019; Back et al, 2009

39

Considerations for AAC users

- Collaborative treatment and programming
- Providing choices can increase expression and discussion of feelings
- Closely observe their reactions and responses for opportunities for
 - Elaboration
 - Personalized statements
 - Triggers

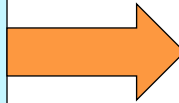


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AAC Best Practices

Instead of this:

- Too many conversational turns
- Only yes/no questions
- Few opportunities for initiation/response
- Interrupting
- Focus on technology



Do this:

- Set the environment
- Allow time
- Confirm understanding
- Create “shared communication spaces”
- Honesty about communication breakdowns



Beukelman et al, 2013

41

“The most important quality in a communication partner is to be person-centered. A good communication partner takes the time to find out the preferences of the AAC user themselves.”



Assistiveware, 2024

42

Strategies recommended by AAC Users

- Respect the effort
- Be patient and wait as long as necessary for response
- Manage noise and physical space
- Watch the person, not the device
- Pay attention to the message and other cues
- Don't dominate the conversation
- Respect AAC user's voice
- Ask before looking or touching
- Accept that communication is on the AAC user's terms



Assistiveware, 2024

43

Teaching Persistence

- Presume competence
- Be persistent when breakdowns occur
- Decide together if it's time to move on



44

Emotional Expression and AAC Use

- Express emotions
- Limitations of expressing emotions with SGD due to decreased inflection/tone
- Strategy use in emotionally charged situations
- Access to emotion words
- Role playing for situations that involve emotion
- “Encourage emotion talk in natural settings”



Blackstone 2010



45

Necessary vocabulary

Adult AAC users identified the need for devices to contain vocabulary relating to:

Employment	College	Sexuality	Reporting crime or abuse
Managing personal assistant services	Managing one's health care	Managing transportation	Communicating in times of man-made and natural emergencies



Bryen et al, 2018

46

Use Scripting Sequences



Create connection and validation:

- Elicit opinions
- Promote decision making
- Encourage venting
- Create opportunities to have tough conversations
- Initiate role play and positive practice within the treatment room

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Difficult conversations won't always feel uncomfortable because with practice your comfort zone will expand.

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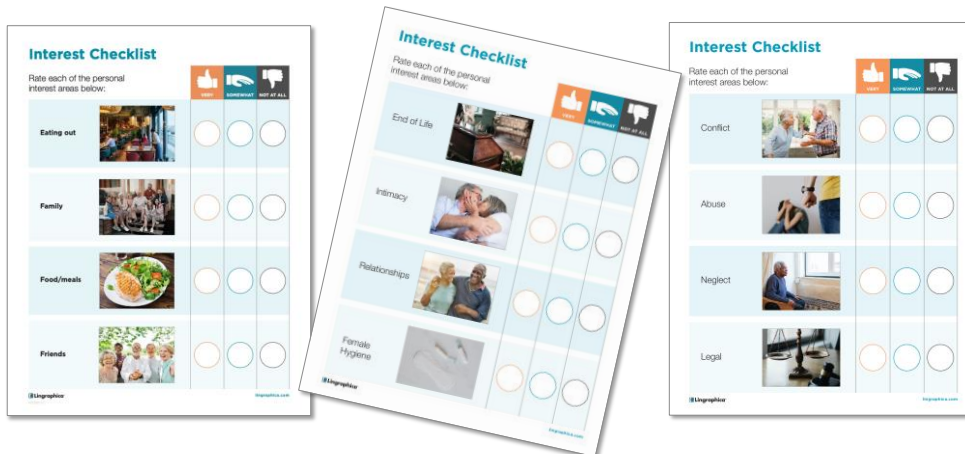
48

Use Your Resources



49

Interest Inventory



50

Mental Health Communication Board

Supported Conversation: **Mental Health**

Yes No Something Else

OVERALL FEELINGS

Thumbs Up Feelings: happy, excited, loved, grateful, proud, hopeful, surprised, relief, optimistic, content

Thumbs Down Feelings: sad, angry, hurt, disappointed, upset, embarrassed, anxious, lonely, worried, confused

Supported Conversation: **Mental Health**

Yes No Something Else

Physical Feelings: tired, sick, cold, hot, hungry, thirsty, uncomfortable, pain, itchy

Who: caregiver, nurse, doctor, wife, therapist, minister/priest, spouse, kids, grandkids, friend, pet

Supported Conversation: **Mental Health**

Yes No Something Else

Subjects: health, family, work, money, housing, medication, legal

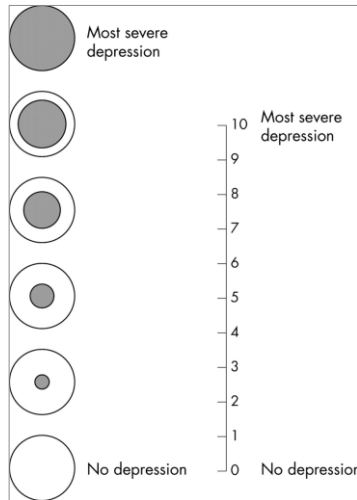
Specific Subjects: safe, not safe, abuse, trauma, suicide, drugs, bite, job loss, sex, relationship, disease, will, advance directive, treatment, alcohol

If you want assistance programming this into the device, schedule a call with us at 888-aphasia.



51

Depression Intensity Scale Circles



The Numbered Graphic Rating Scale (NGRS) and the Depression Intensity Scale Circles (DISCs) are displayed on separate laminated cards.

L Turner-Stokes et al. J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry 2005;76:1273-1278


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52

Personal Health Questionnaire


1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things









2. Feeling down, depressed or hopeless







If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

0

Not difficult at all

1

Somewhat difficult

2

Very difficult

3

Extremely difficult

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(Kroenke et al, 2001)

53

Special Topics

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Intimacy and Health



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Communication Disorders can lead to...

- Reduced...
 - access to sex ed curriculum (Pugliese et al, 2020)
 - relationship and sexual satisfaction (Ford et al, 2018; Byers et al, 2013)
- Difficulty finding romantic partners (Kearney et al, 2020)
- Loss of intimacy (Kitzmüller & Ervik, 2015)
- Divorce (Trygged et al, 2011)



56

Insights from AAC Users

- 88% of participants in the Speak Up Project reported "no means" for communication about healthy sexuality & related topics
- In a study of adult AAC users most participants reported no opportunity to discuss healthy sexuality at all
- AAC underequipped when it comes to
 - Sex
 - Sexuality
 - Gender
 - Genitals
 - Sexual/Reproductive Healthcare



Collier et al, 2006; Denome, 2020

57

Ableism and Infantilization

- Medical providers asking questions of caregiver rather than device user
- Staff removing words from a device they feel they aren't appropriate
- Disabled youth not taught about sex education with assumption they can't/shouldn't/won't have sex
 - Unable to learn about sex and related issues, limits safety and self advocacy



Northwest Augmentative Communication Society, 2024

58

Sex Ed Best Practices

Sex education must include:

- Development of effective communication and decision-making skills
 - Assertiveness
 - Ability to say “no”
- Ways to create satisfying relationships
- Sexuality is an integral part of being human



Neufield et al, 2002

59

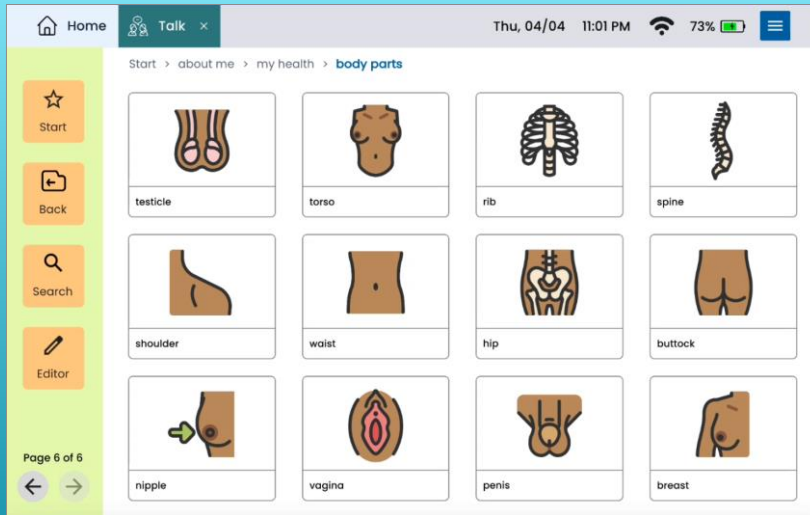
“While AAC clinicians typically do not become involved in sexuality education, they often are the gatekeepers of communication tools and strategies that can be used within the context of sexual health education and communicating about sexuality, abuse, and dignity.”



Collier et al, 2006

60

Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example

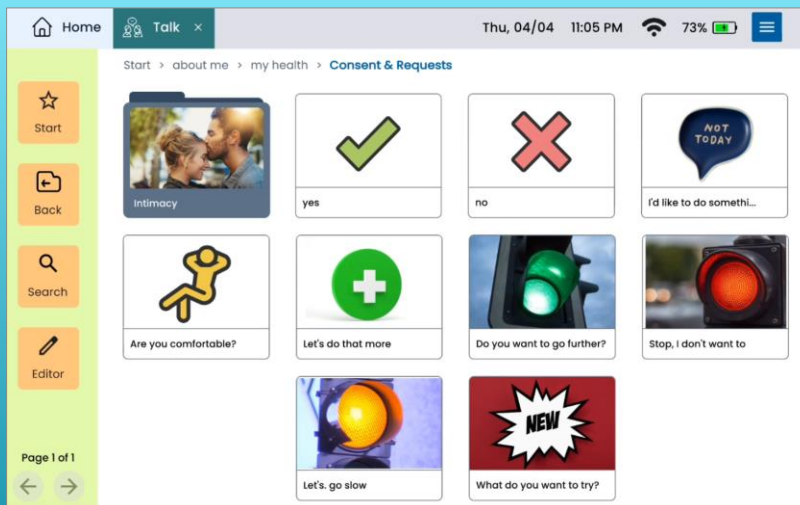


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Body Parts

61

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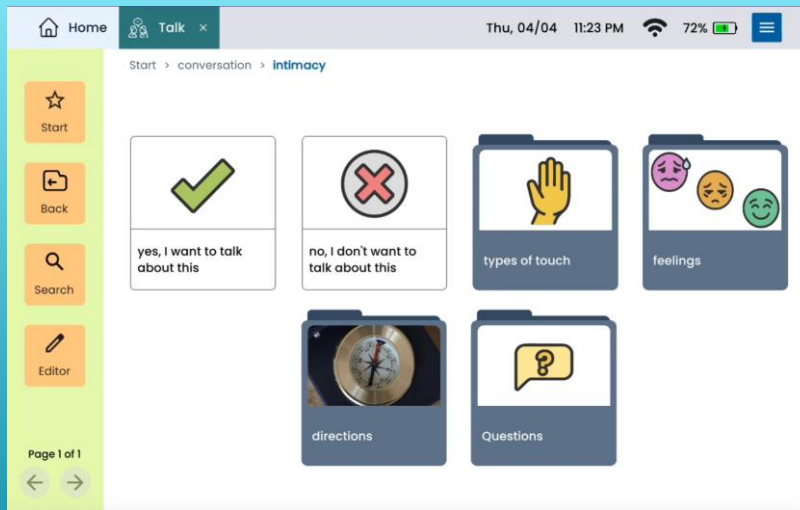


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Consent & Requests

62

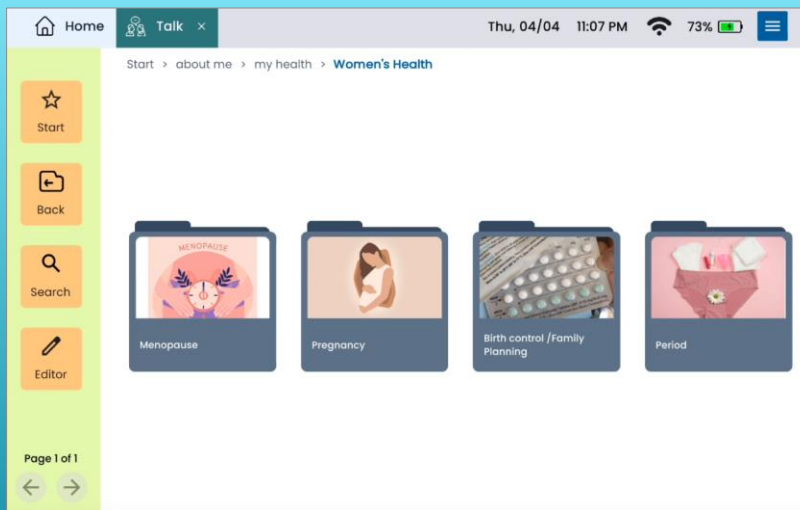
Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example



Intimacy

63

Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example



Women's Health

64

Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example

Home Talk × Thu, 04/04 11:09 PM 73%

Start > about me > my health > Women's Health > Period

Start Back Search Editor Page 1 of 2

Heating Pad Midol Tylenol cramping

headache panty liner maxipad tampon

Lingraphica®

Period

65

Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example

Home Talk × Thu, 04/04 11:11 PM 72%

Start > about me > my health > Women's Health > Menopause

Start Back Search Editor Page 1 of 1

Hot Flashes How can I reduce symptoms? bleeding Mood swings

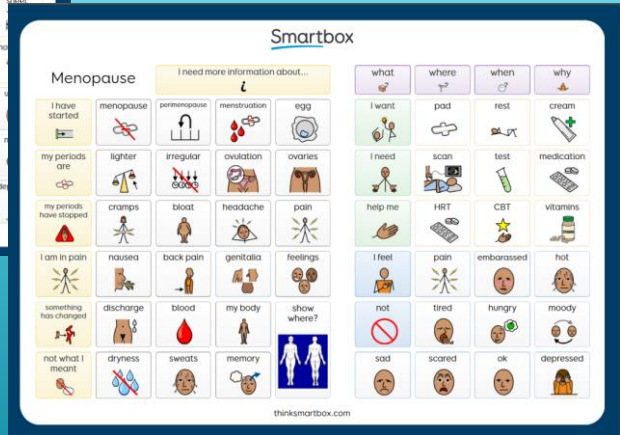
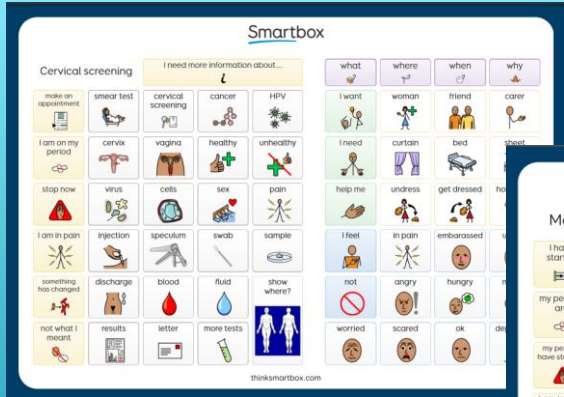
I have no energy pain with intercourse urinary tract infection hormone replacement therapy

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Menopause

66

Smartbox: Light Tech Boards



Smartbox, 2022

67

Abuse



68

Prevalence of Abuse

- Disabled people are 2x as likely to be victim of a violent crime than non-disabled peers
 - Particularly those with behavioral, intellectual, and **communication disabilities**
- Estimated that large proportion of abuse occurs by family, peers, and service providers



Northwest Augmentative Communication Society, 2024

69

Prevalence of Abuse

In study of adult AAC users:



Bryen et al, 2003; Collier et al, 2006

70

Prevalence of Abuse

Victims of crime who cannot communicate effectively less likely to

- Have ability to prevent or report crimes
- Access justice system and counseling services



Sullivan, 2000

71

Reduce the risk!

- Proper names of body parts is important across the lifespan
 - Medical, hygiene, self-care needs
 - Reporting abuse
- Ensure adequate vocabulary to talk about sex and intimate relations and report such a crime or abuse
- Encourage development of strong social networks



Bryen et al, 2018

72

Considerations

- AAC users often need assistance adding/editing their software
- Any parent, partner, professional or other communication partner can prevent an AAC user from talking about
 - Genitalia
 - Abuse
 - Attraction
- Prevent user to cover abuse OR assume user has no need to communicate about these topics



Denome, 2020

73

Vocabulary Considerations

- By signaling that these are “adult topics” it’s signaling that children and young people who are forced to confront these “adult topics” have to choose between their youth and the ability to communicate what’s going on.

“We know that the best victim is one who can’t tell”



Denome, 2020

74

Abuse Victims

- Must overcome immense:
 - Shame
 - Discomfort
 - Potential retaliation
 - Trauma response
- AAC users
 - All of the above plus communication barriers and not having access to the words they need for reporting



Denome, 2020

75

The SLPs Role

Professionals must ensure three key supports:

- Access to needed socially-valued vocabulary
- Rich social networks
- Strategies to increase personal safety and to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of a crime



Bryen et al, 2018

76

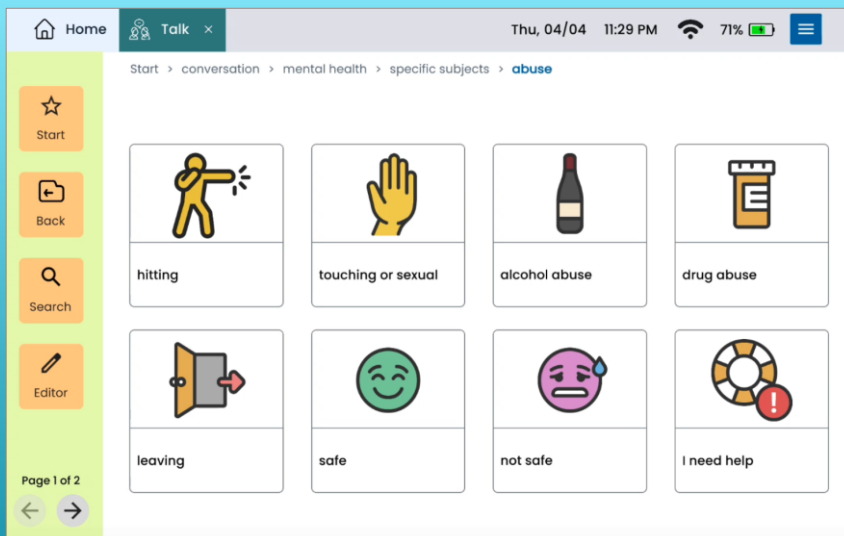
“ People who use AAC need communication aids with relevant and accessible vocabulary so that they can reduce the risks of being victimized; report crime and abuse when it happens and, most importantly, be believed when they do report. ”



Bryen et al, 2003

77

Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example



Abuse

78

Centre for AAC: Light Tech Boards

Communication for ALL - English to Portuguese Young Alphabet Board

How Como	burn Queimar	get Obter	sad Triste	in Dentro	family Familia	night Noite	I can't speak, but can hear and understand you. Eu não posso falar, mas posso ouvir e entender.
what O que	don't Não faça	know Conhecer	angry Bravo	out Fora	home Casa	food Comida	I will point where... Eu vou apontar que você estava
when Quando	help Socorro	look Veja	forced Forçado	under Sob	lime/mine Eu	gun Arma de fogo	Please contact my family Por favor entre em contato com minha família
where Onde	please beg Por favor	sex Sexo	scared Assustada	man/mim/mãe Homem	police Polícia	money/sweets Dinheiro	Ask me questions if you need to, but please wait patiently for my answers Me faça uma pergunta se precisar mas espere pacientemente pela minha resposta
who Quem	stop Pare	scream Grito	alone Sozinho	sore Dorido	toilet bathroom Banheiro	mother Mãe	<p>Copyright 2016, D. H. Bryen, J. Bornman, P. Kershaw & G. Ledwaba Institute on Disabilities, Temple University Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication University of Pretoria The Picture Communication Symbols ©1991-2009 DynaVox Mayer-Johnson LLC. Used with permission. All rights reserved worldwide.</p>
they Eles	tell Contar	steal Roubar	ashamed shy Tímido	woman Mulher	alcohol Alcool	secret Segredo	
not on this board Não neste fórum	touch Tocar	swear Jurar	bad Mau	clothes Roupa	car Carro	school work Escola	
hit/punch Acertar	bleed Sangrar	threaten Ameaçar	friendly Amigável	doctor Médico	day Dia	father Pai	



Abuse

Centre for AAC: Light Tech Boards

Communication for ALL - English to Afrikaans Adult Alphabet Board

How Hoe	burn Brand	get Kry	sad Hartseer	in In	family Familie	night Nag/Aand	I can't speak, but can hear and understand you. Ek kan nie praat nie, maar ek jou hoor en verstaan
what Wat	don't Moenie	know Weet	angry Kwaad	out Uit	home Huis	food Kos	I will point where... Ek sal wys waar
when Wanneer	help Help	look Kyk	forced Dwing	under Onder	lime/mine Ek/My/Myn	gun Geweer	Please contact my family Asseblief kontak my familie
where Waar	please beg Smeek	sex Seks	scared Bang	man/mim/mãe Man/Hy/Hom	police Polisie	money/sweets Geld Lekkers	Ask me questions if you need to, but please wait patiently for my answers Vra my gerus vroe as dit nodig is, maar wag asseblief geduldig vir die antwoorde
who Wie	stop Stop	scream Skreeu	alone Alleen	sore Seer	toilet bathroom Badkamer	mother Mamma	<p>Copyright 2016, D. H. Bryen, J. Bornman, P. Kershaw & G. Ledwaba Institute on Disabilities, Temple University Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication University of Pretoria The Picture Communication Symbols ©1991-2009 DynaVox Mayer-Johnson LLC. Used with permission. All rights reserved worldwide.</p>
they Hulle	tell Vertel/Sê	steal Steel	ashamed shy Skam	woman Vrou/Sy/Haan	alcohol Alkohol	secret Geheim	
not on this board Nie op die bord nie	touch Vat	swear Vloek	bad Slegte	clothes Klere	car Kar	school work Skool werk	
hit/punch Slaan	bleed Bloei	threaten Dreig	friendly Vriendelike	doctor Dokter	day Dag	father Pappa	



Abuse

Access to Justice System

- Communication through AAC is not familiar to judges, attorneys, and court recorders within most courtrooms
- SLP should
 - Orient attorneys and judges prior to the trial to the use of AAC, types of vocabulary and characteristics of appropriate question techniques
 - May be responsible for requesting accommodations on behalf of the individual



Blake Huer et al, 2006

81

AAC in the Justice System



82

Centre for AAC: Light Tech Boards

Testifying in court

who	family	boyfriend	girlfriend	man	woman	priest	stranger
driver	neighbor	friend	doctor	child	adult	teacher	police officer
when	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
day	night	before	after	birthday	christmas	esster	holidays
where	home	lounge	bathroom	bedroom	church	garden	school
inside	outside	shack	shops	movies	police station	outside	toilet
how	back	front	apart	forced	kicked	punched	touchad
threatened	sucked	rubbed	spread legs	pay	kissed	blindfield	grabbed
what	sweets	alcohol	money	cripps	condom	cream	drugs

Copyright :
White, Bormann & Johnson (2015).
Please contact the CAAC for further assistance:
+27124202001
www.caac.up.ac.za

*Widgit software used

 Lingraphica®

Court

83

Self-Advocacy

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84

Ways to Support Self-Advocacy

Ensure access to appropriate vocabulary and messages reflecting the AAC User

- Words and prestored messages for protesting and rejecting, messages that allow expression of disagreement or negative opinions
 - This is unfair
 - This doesn't work for me
 - I don't think so
 - That's disrespectful
 - What part did you not understand?



PrAACtical AAC, 2018

85

Ways to Support Self-Advocacy

- Proactive self-advocacy statements
 - Please do what I ask
 - I have a right to be heard
 - You are ignoring me
 - I already told you no
 - It's on my IEP
- Model It and Role Play
- Consider adding the Communication Bill of Rights



PrAACtical AAC, 2018

86

“ I have been inspired by others’ medical boards full of phrases like “don’t touch me,” “what are my next steps,” and “I need more information.” I haven’t yet made my own folder for medical self-advocacy, but being around folks who are confident in standing up for themselves and communicating in whatever way works best for them has really empowered me... ”

- endeaver* corbin



Corbin, 2021

87

AAC User Perspective

Recommendations

- AAC users should surround themselves with strong self-advocates
- Providers and caregivers should make sure the AAC user they support has every opportunity to be in community with disabled advocates who can role model what it looks like to assert their right to equal access.
- Remember that self-advocacy often starts with refusal
 - AAC user gets to say “no” however works best for them



Corbin, 2021

88

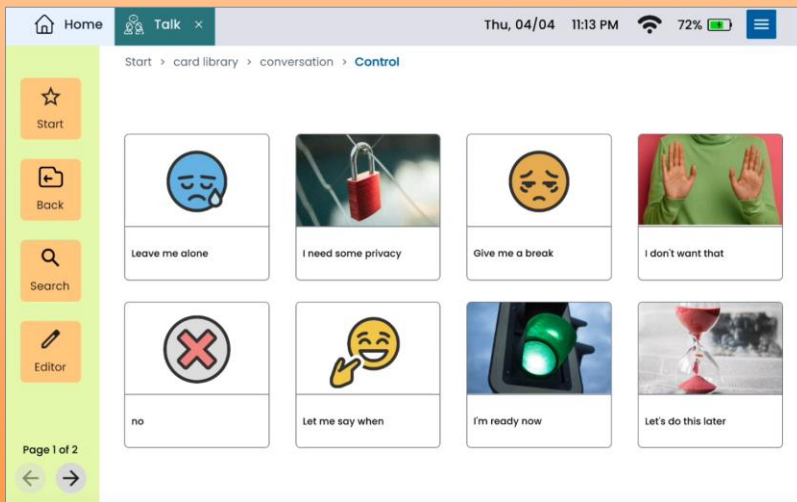
Communication Bill of Rights



PrAACtical AAC, 2018

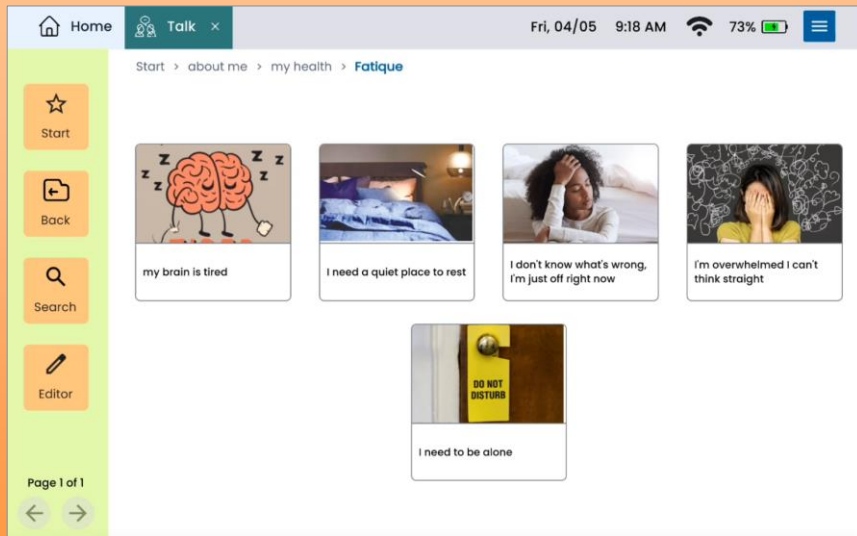
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Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example



90

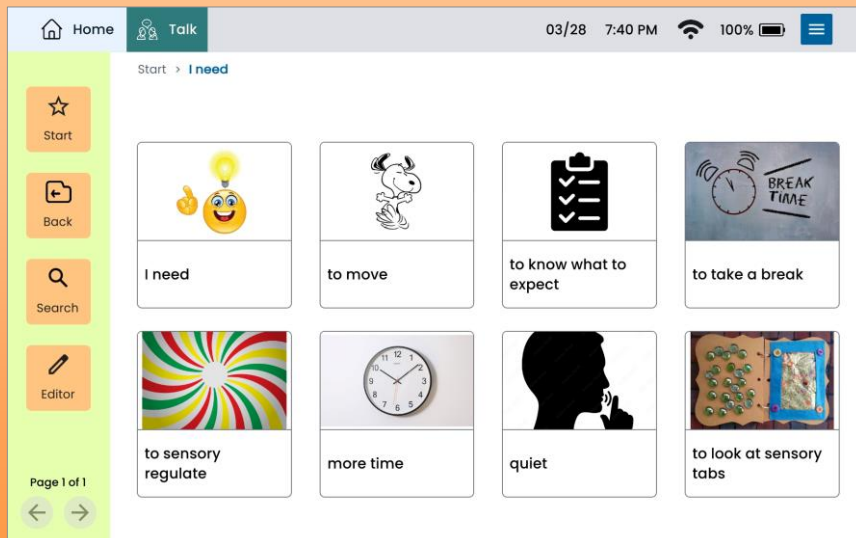
Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example



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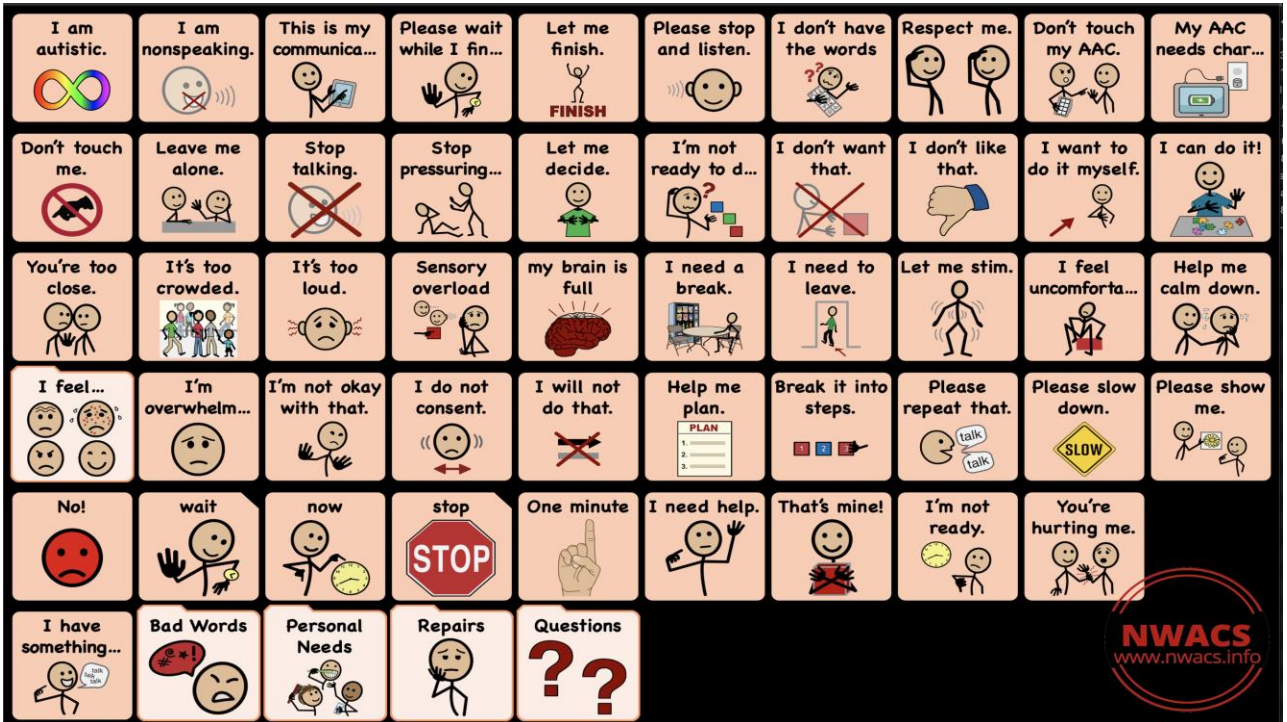
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Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example



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93

End-of-Life

End-of-Life Considerations

- Effective communication during end-of-life is crucial for health care delivery
- Misinterpretation can influence how the quality of care is rendered and perceived
- AAC assists with energy conservation and communication
- Without adequate communication options, AAC users report loss of dignity due to inability to express end-of-life wishes



Cullen, 2021; Fried Oken, 2018

95

End-of-Life Topics

Essential topics identified by AAC users with ALS

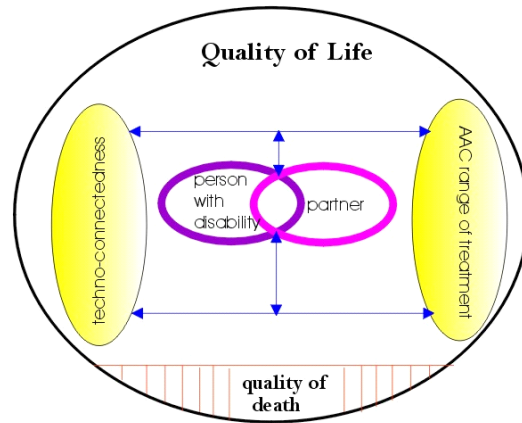
- details on daily care
- health related issues addressed to providers
- quality of death
- instructions to significant others after death
- funeral arrangements
- reminiscing



Fried Oken, 2018

96

Framework for End-of-Life Issues



Fried Oken, 2018

97

Perspectives from Person with ALS

- AAC Devices
 - Medical Necessity
 - Provide dramatic impact on quality of life and will to live
 - Only part of the solution
 - Alternatives such as alphabet and communication boards are essential
 - Need access to computer, email and Internet
 - Education
 - Entertainment
 - Social Value



Fried Oken, 2018

98

Advance Directive Communication

Advanced Directive Communication Card

Name: _____

Signature: _____

I have a healthcare proxy

I have a healthcare power of attorney

I have an advance directive

Advanced Directive Communication Card

CPR: YES NO

Defibrillation: YES NO

Ventilator Use: YES NO

Artificial Nutrition: YES NO

Comfort Care: YES NO

Designated Contact Person: _____

Lingraphica

Advanced Directive: What Do You Value?

Instruct client to indicate how much they value each of the following parts of their life to understand which are the most important to their outlook towards life and/or where they are in their disease process.

Eating

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Communication

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Mobility

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Religious/spiritual beliefs

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Being with family

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Advanced Directive: What Do You Value?

Dignity

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Minimizing financial burden

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Independence

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Physical comfort

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Emotional support

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



99

Lingraphica

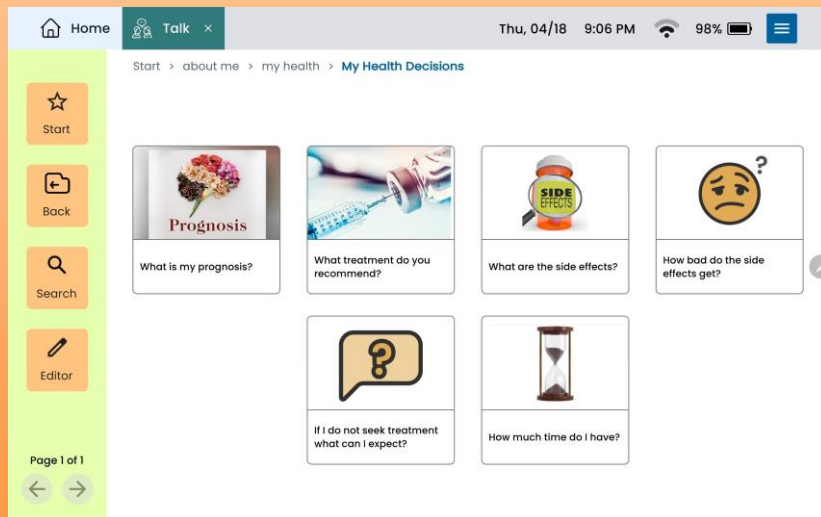
This is a no-technology communication board. Our full-featured communication devices offer five different ways to communicate, are completely customizable, and include more than 10,000 words and phrases. For over 30 years, Lingraphica has helped adults with aphasia and other speech and language impairments improve their communication and quality of life.

Call us at 888-274-2742 or visit lingraphica.com to learn more.



100

Lingraphica High Tech AAC Example



 Lingraphica®

101

Case Study 1

 Lingraphica®

102

Person with Parkinson's Disease

- Rapidly progressing symptoms
- Notified SLP she planned to donate her brain to science
- Had NOT discussed with physician or family
- Wanted to use AAC to communicate her wishes and prepare specifics for her funeral services



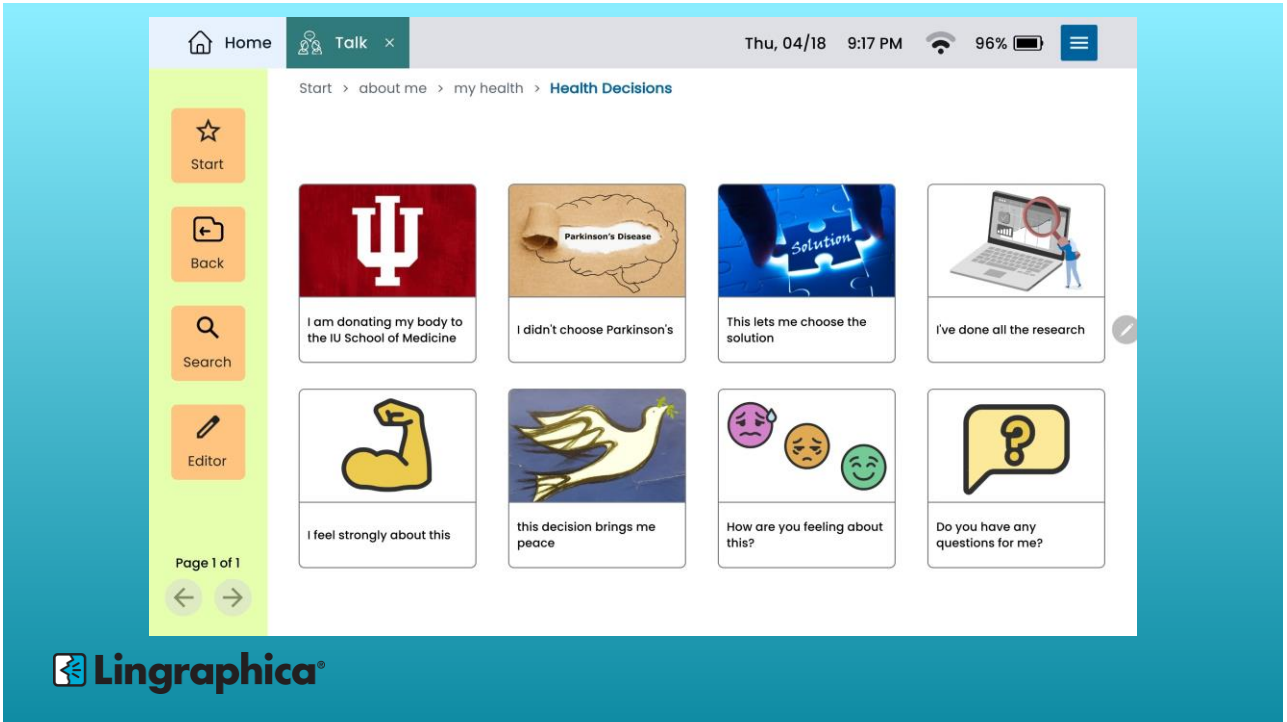
103

Group Discussion

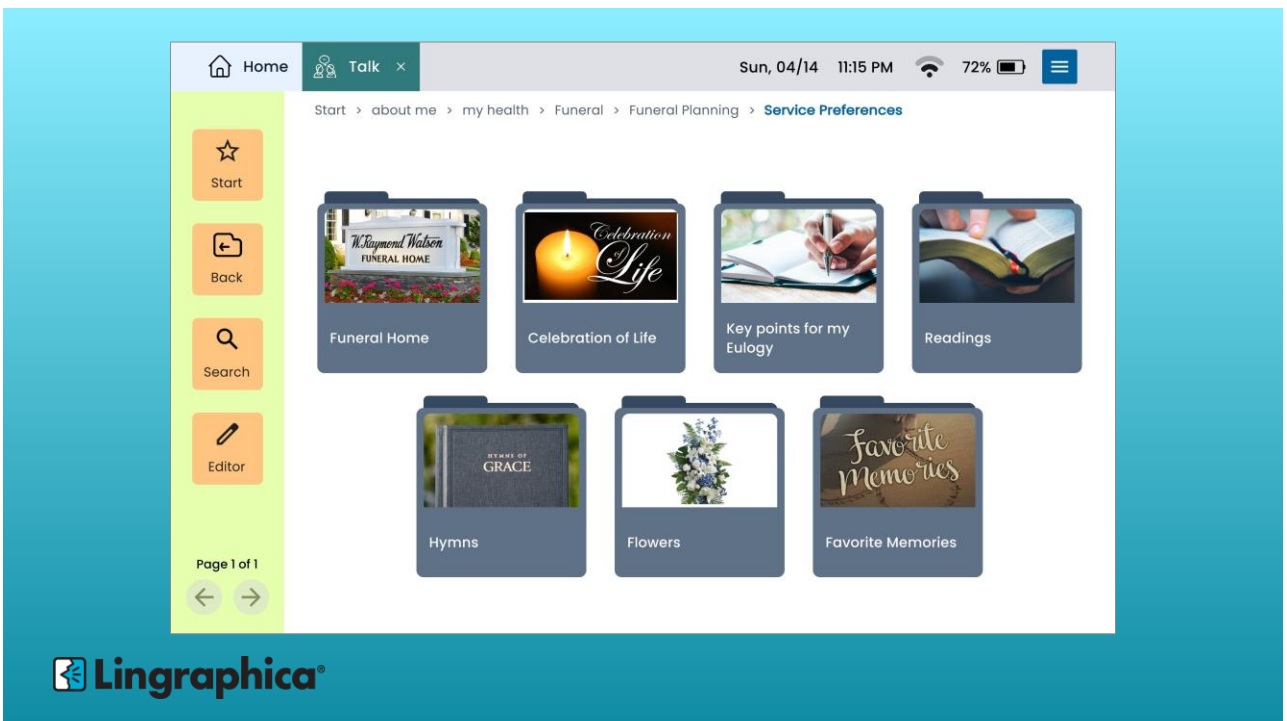
- How would you help your client communicate her wishes?



104



105



106

Case Study 2



107

Autistic AAC User

- Approached by stranger on paratransit van, felt violated and uncomfortable
 - Personal space invaded
 - Stranger talked in tone appropriate for a child
 - Stranger demanded high five and pinky swear
 - Stranger responded aggressively to AAC user's attempts to back away
 - Stranger demanded better response next time they see them



Baggs, M. 2012

108

What AAC user needed to communicate

- I don't want to talk to you
- I don't want to touch you
- Don't ever make another attempt to touch me
- Don't lean towards me or get in my face
- I don't ever want to see you again



Baggs, M. 2012

109

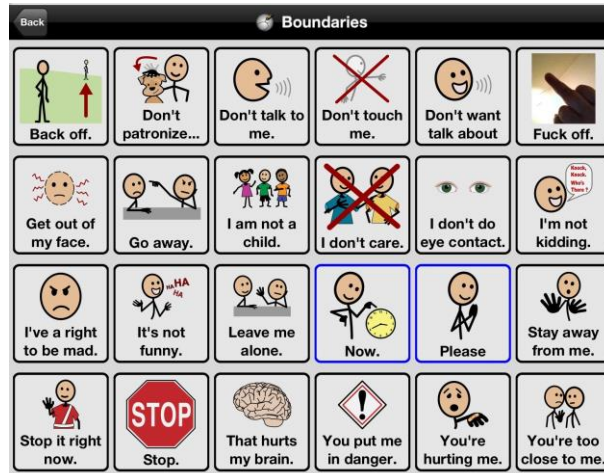
Group Discussion

- How would you help your client advocate for themselves in this situation?
- What considerations could have been made related to vocabulary on the device to give the client more control at the time of the incident?



110

Outcome



 Lingraphica®

Baggs, M. 2012

111

Insights from AAC User

- Advocacy page designed with intent of various levels of politeness and forcefulness
- Without this communication page she would have been trapped
- Not having this vocabulary leaves AAC users vulnerable
- “Without rehearsing, there’s a big chance I’ll never use a page like this” – Mel Baggs

 Lingraphica®

Baggs, M. 2012

112

Insights from AAC User

“It is absolutely vital that people who use communication devices, have ways to respond to violation of our basic boundaries. Disabled people are far more likely than others to have others behave invasively with us, ranging from subtle to violent...and we have to have the means to say no forcefully, even rudely.”

- Mel Baggs



Baggs, M. 2012

113

Case Study 3



114

Person with Aphasia

- Communication Profile:
 - 1 -2 word utterance length
 - Multimodal strategies of spelling and writing
- Collaborative goal setting discussion:
 - Language for dating and navigating relationships
 - Quick access to longer phrases
 - Benefits from predictive text and picture support



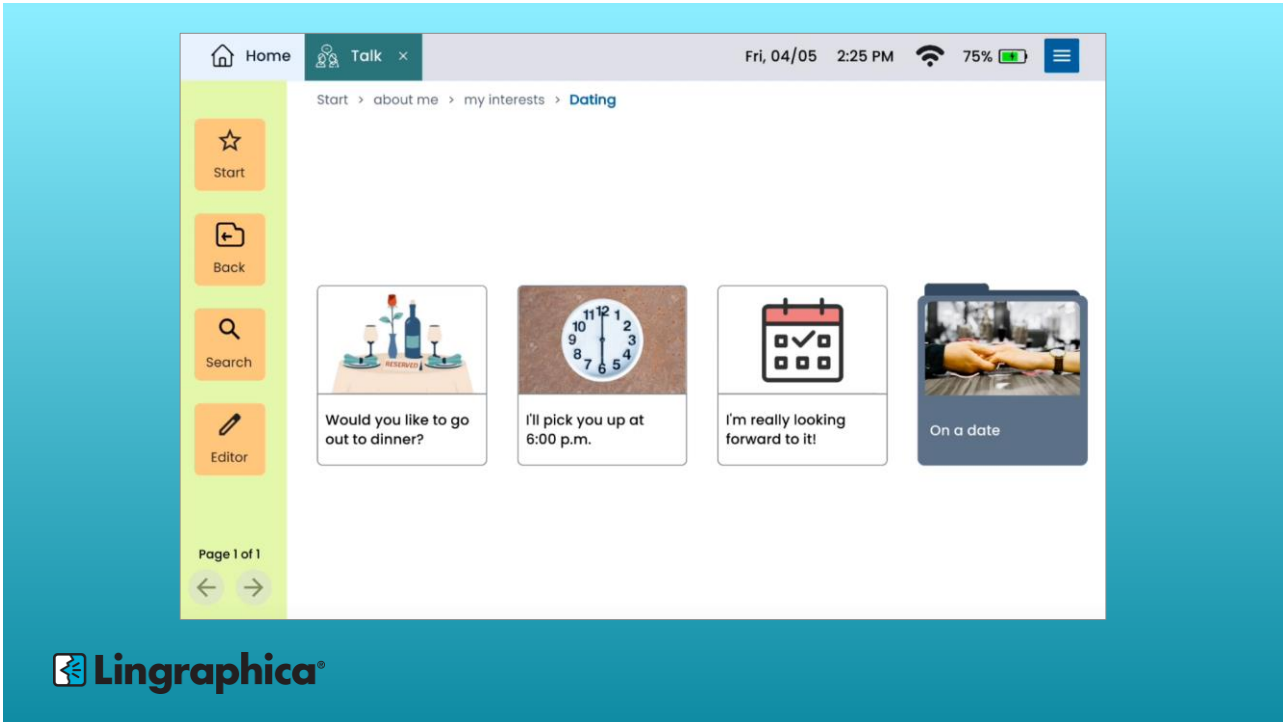
115

Group Discussion

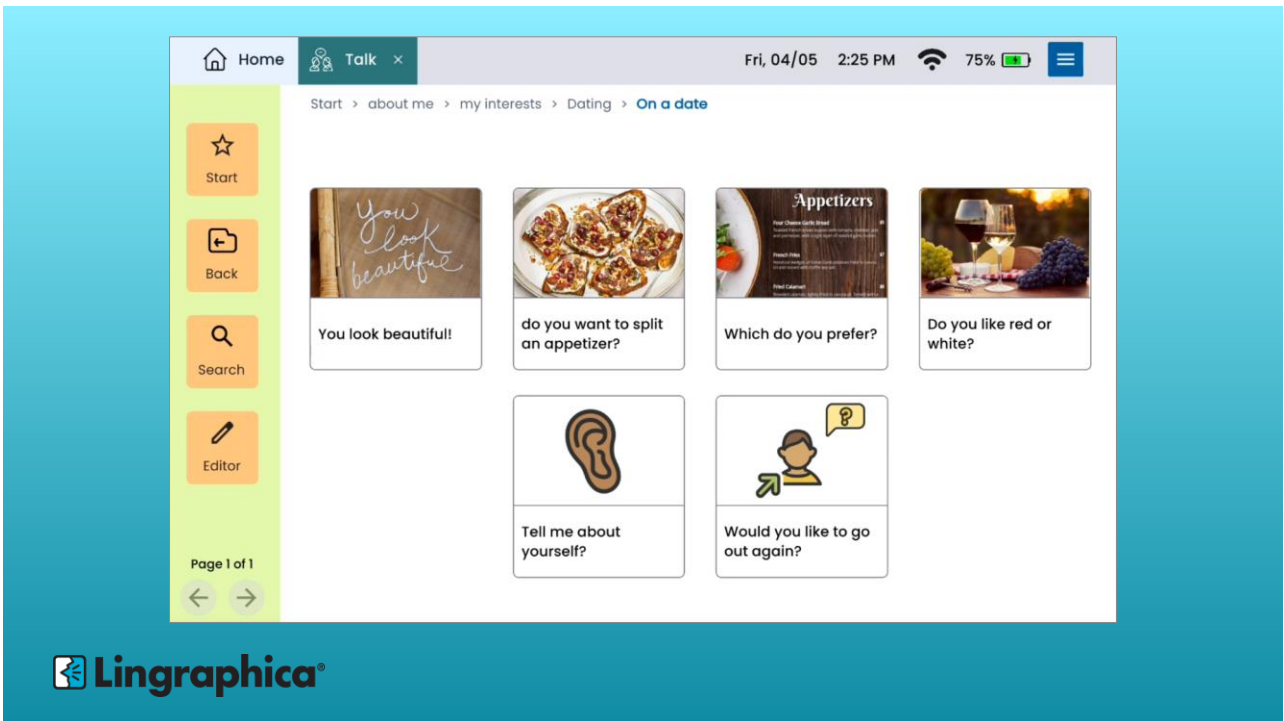
- What AAC options could you provide for this client?
- What might help him feel more comfortable using AAC when meeting new people or on a date?



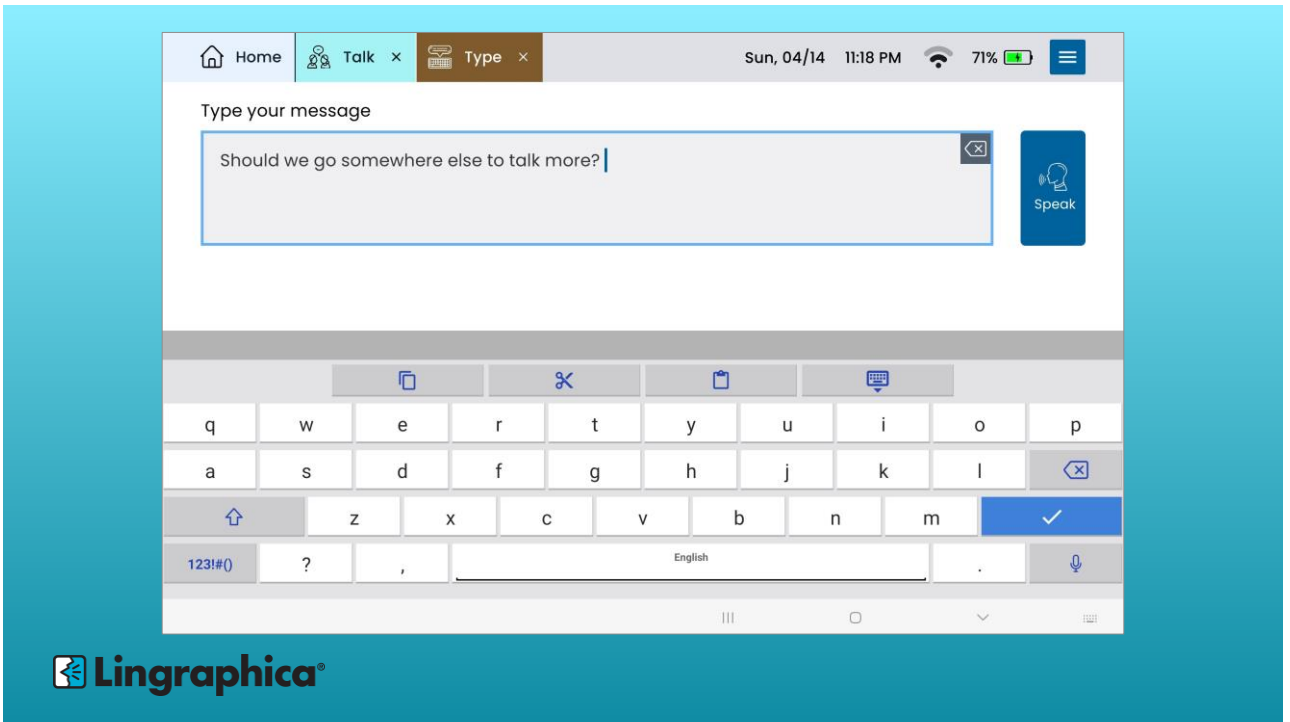
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117



118



119

Case Study 4



120

Assessing AAC needs in acute care

- Admitted to hospital s/p acute myocardial infarction
 - Subsequently developed multiple brain infarcts, hemiplegia, mental status changes, acute respiratory failure requiring tracheostomy
- Displayed agitation and uncontrolled pain
- Palliative care consulted
 - Initiated SLP consult



Radtke et al., 2011

121

Group Discussion

- What would you do during assessment?
- What AAC options would you attempt with the client to assess unmet needs?



122

Outcome

- Topic notebook
 - Patient able to communicate hygiene needs
- Alphabet Board
 - Patient spelled her occupation and job location
- Written Choice
 - Patient signaled Y/N or pointed to different options



Radtke et al., 2011

123

Alphabet Board Example



[EyeLink2: Demonstration \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyeLink2)

124

Additional Considerations

- Required breaks and frequent cueing
- PMV initiated, able to produce single words, phrases mostly unintelligible
- Communication supported with combination of AAC and verbalization with PMV
- Strategies posted in room, reviewed with nursing and family



Radtke et al., 2011

125

Case Study 5



126

Person with Dysphagia and Dysarthria

- In acute care, presents with severe dysphagia and dysarthria s/p brainstem infarct
- Intact cognition and able to write
- VFSS performed, recommended NPO with g-tube



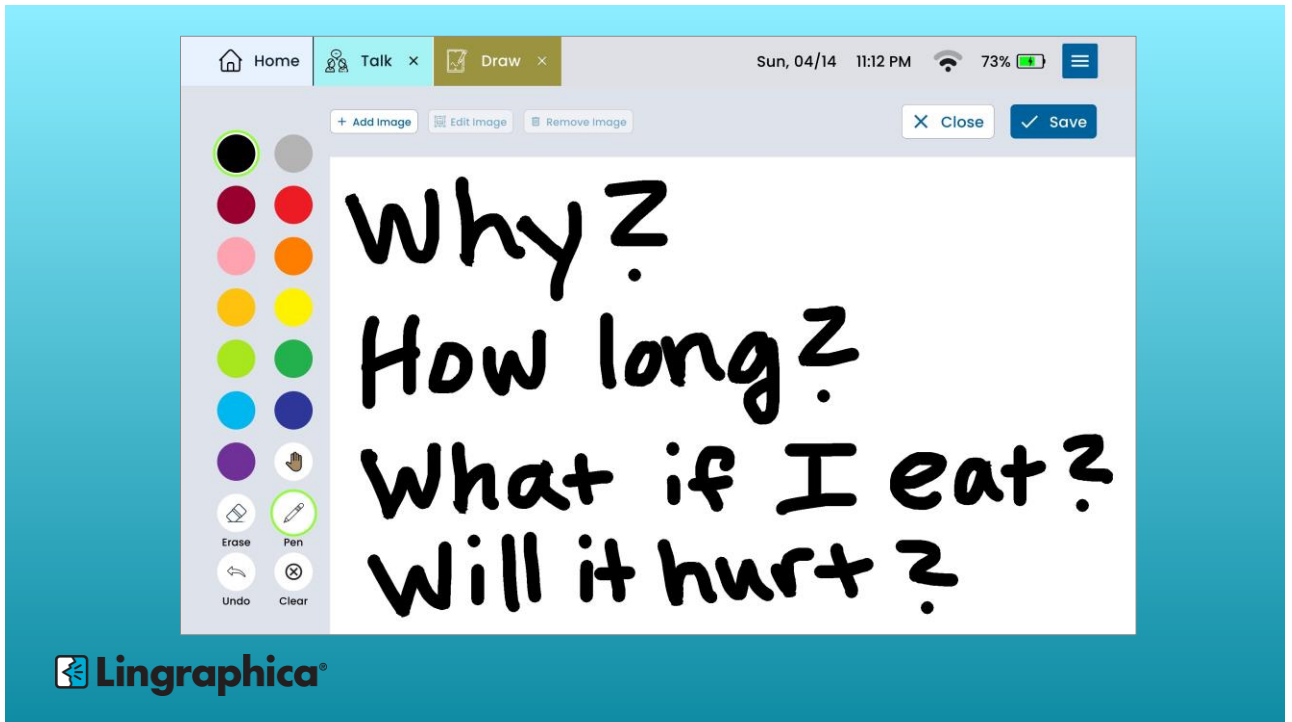
127

Group Discussion

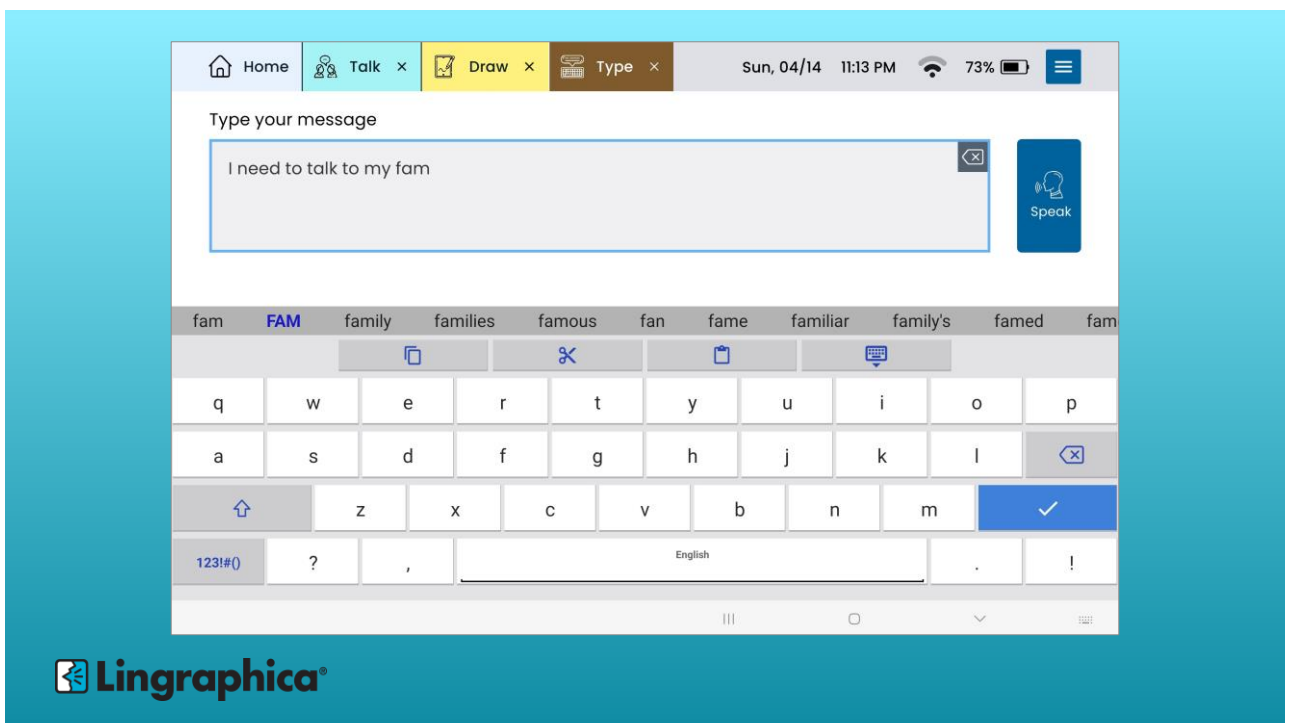
- How would you ensure clients understanding of recommendations and ensure he had needed communication tools to ask questions and express consent?



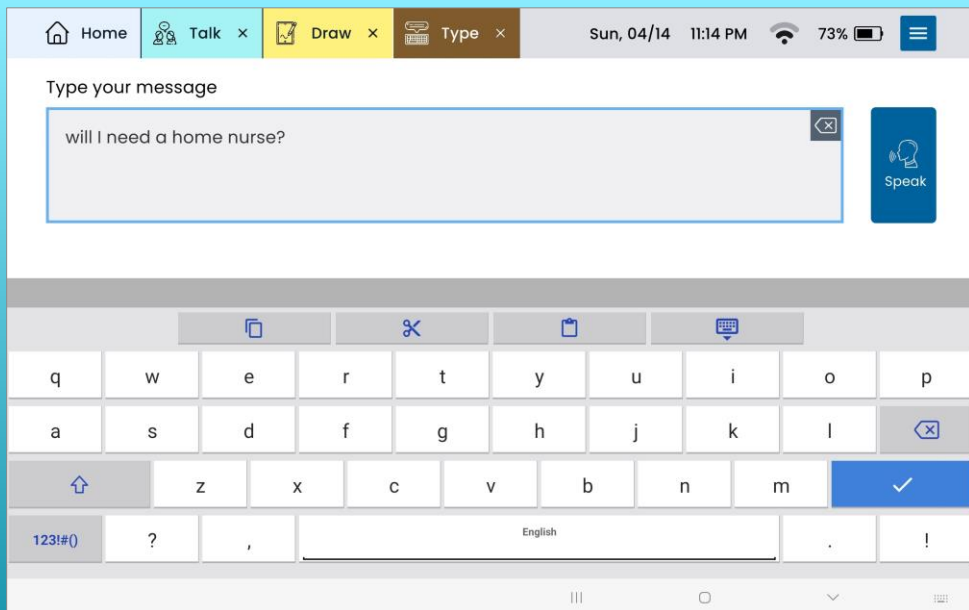
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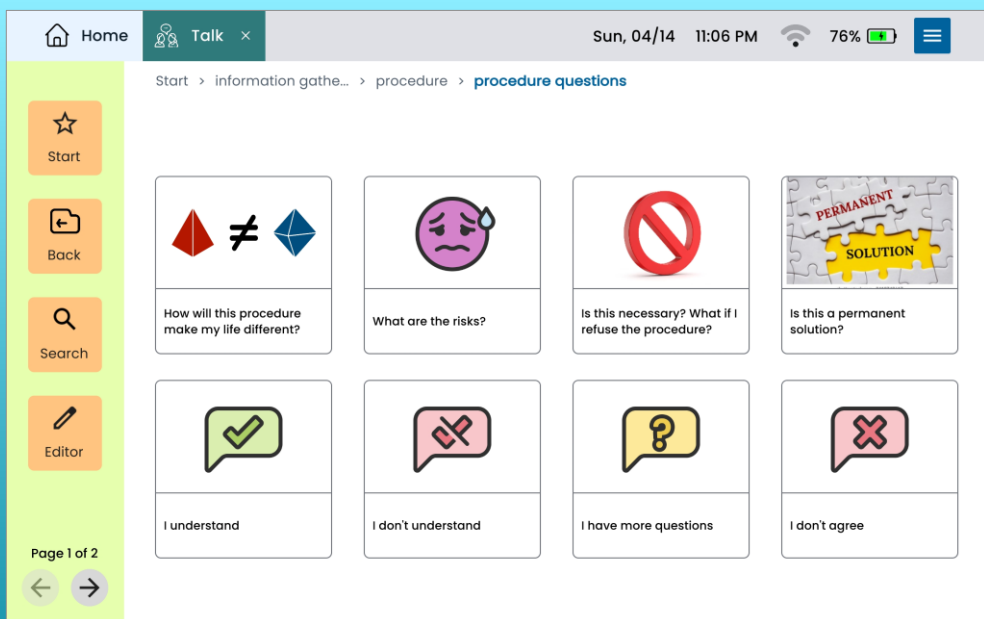


130



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131



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132

Dysphagia and AAC

Effective communication system required to discuss

- Consent
- Quality of life
- Impact of dysphagia on health and well-being
- Facilitate involvement in dysphagia management decisions



Hemsley and Balandin, 2009

133

“All efforts should be made to involve the person with dysphagia and complex communication needs. They are an important participant...and may require access to a variety of AAC modes in order to participate in discussions related to their assessment, intervention and management.”



Hemsley and Balandin, 2009

134

Conclusion



135

“ Choosing to avoid uncomfortable feelings offer immediate short-term relief, but avoidance can lead to long-term consequences. ”
~ Amy Morin, LCSW, author



136

Conclusion

- Client Profiles
- Defining Difficult Conversations and the SLPs Role
- Tips for Difficult Conversations
- Use Your Resources
- Special Topics
- Case Studies
- Q&A



137

Access Course Resources



138

Additional Resources

- Centre for Augmentative & Alternative Communication: <https://www.up.ac.za/centre-for-augmentative-alternative-communication>
- Northwest Augmentative Communication Society: <https://nwacs.info/aac-and-consent-safety-dignity>
- The Spice Institute: <https://www.spiceinstitute.org/freeguides>
- Smartbox: <https://thinksmartbox.com/news/female-health-communication-boards/>



139

Recommended Blogs for insight from people who use AAC

Donnie TC Denome: <https://donnie.lgbt/>

Mel Baggs: <https://ballastexistenz.wordpress.com/>

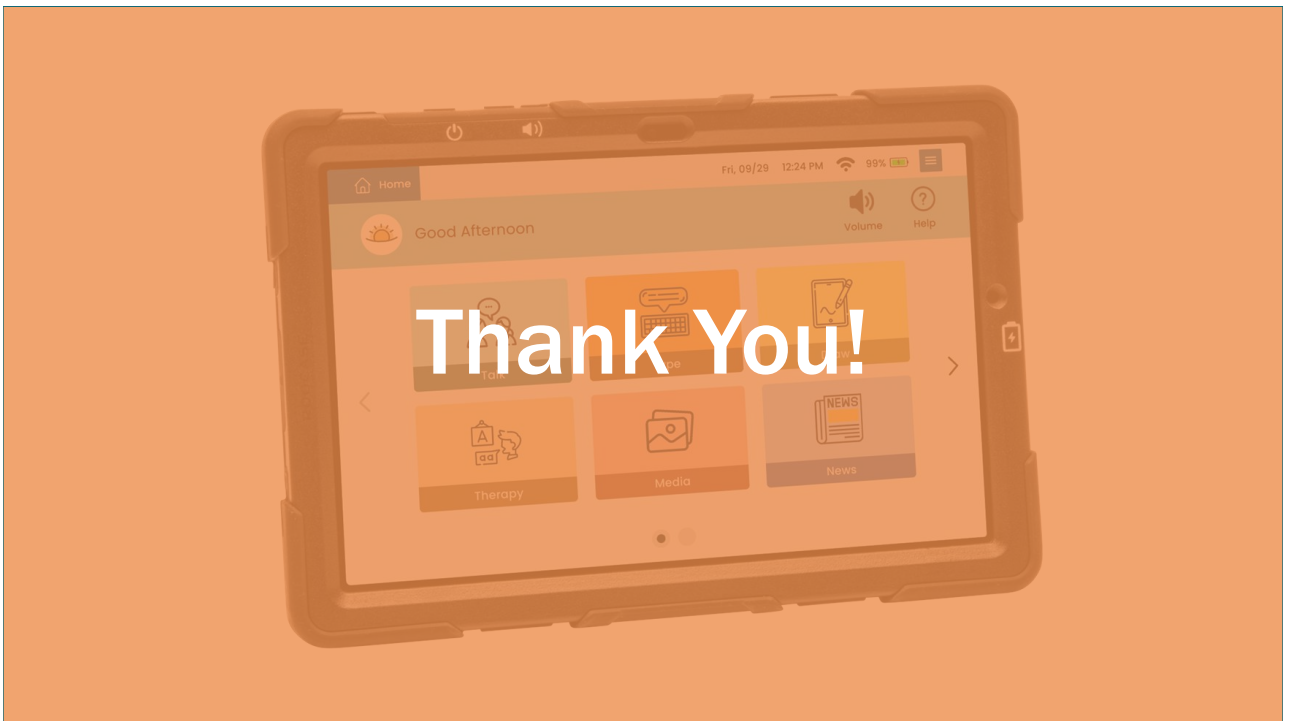


140

Questions & Answers



142



143

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145

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146

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147

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