USSAAC THE VOICE OF AAC

The USSAAC Webinar Series

Ethics and AAC

March 24th, 2021

Presenter: Nicole Tripp, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech Language Pathologist, Speak for Yourself, LLC

Judith Schoonover, Med, OTR/L, ATP, FAOTA

Tracy Racksenperger, Ph.D.

Facilitator: Stephanie Meehan Ph.D., CCC-SLP

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Webinar Logistics

ASHA CEUs – live webcast

- Free - USSAAC members;
  $25 – non-USSAAC members
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https://ussaac.org/news-events/webinars/

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AAC & Ethics

Tracy Lee Rackensperger
Nicole Tripp
Judith Schoonover

3/24/2021

Seminar Objectives:

- Participants will be able to describe ethical issues impacting professionals in assessment and treatment using AAC in the school and private setting.
- Participants will be able to list solutions ethical concerns with interprofessional collaboration.
- Participants will be able to discuss ethical issues from the perspective of someone who uses AAC.

Presenter Disclosures

Financial: Nicole is employed by Speak for Yourself, LLC

Non-Financial:

- Tracy is on the Board of USSAAC
- Nicole is an ASHA Representative to the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons With Severe Disabilities (NJC)
- Judith represents AOTA on the National Joint Committee (NJC) for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities and serves on the editorial board of the Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits (ATOB) Journal.

** ASHA CEUs will be available for this webinar **

Issues/Scenarios (PWUAAC)

- Dealing with family / staff wants versus person who uses AAC needs
- “Appropriate” vocabulary – but who’s defining “appropriate”?
- Making people use AAC verses natural speech
- Respecting there are multiple ways of communicating
- Limited expectations regarding independence

Solutions (PWUAAC)

- People using AAC needs trump all others' wants
- Adults are adults. Norms are changing. Children need to learn appropriate behaviors, not denied access to "inappropriateness"
- Arrange real situations where AAC is needed
- Accept texting, Zoom chatting, gestures, pointing, etc. as AAC
- Approach need for communicating as a pathway to independence

Issues/Scenarios (SLP)

- Not including PWUAAC and family in process
- Lack of thorough evaluation process, including other professionals
- One device fits all
- CLD Issues
- Prompting hierarchy
- Requiring low tech before high tech
- Having an age requirement

Solutions (SLP)

- Developing a PWUAAC centered focus
- Professional Development
- Networking
- Prioritizing Pre-service AAC Instruction
- Collaboration with leadership in a school district
- Collaboration with other professionals (PP to schools)

Solutions- PD & Networking Resources

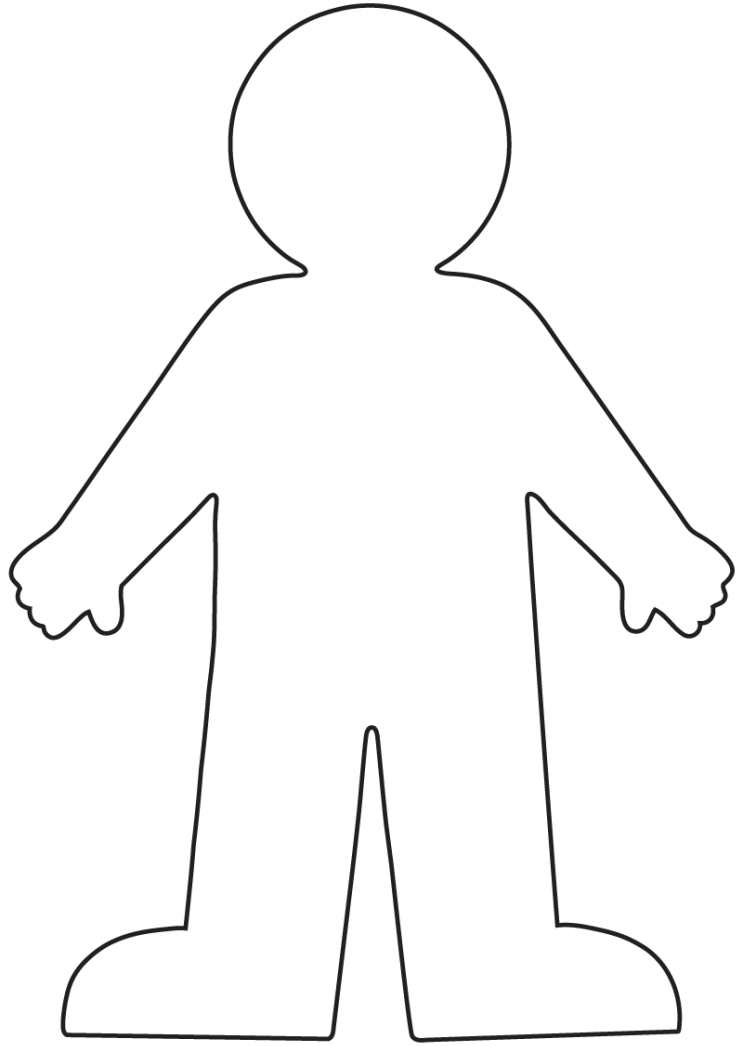
- Not just device specific
- ATIA- great practice-based resources
- ASHA Learning Pass- evidence based practice
- SIG 12
- AAC in the Cloud
- Talking with Tech Podcast
- AAC Certificates through various universities
- NJC
- AAC for the SLP
- Praactical AAC

Ethical and professional responsibilities of providers

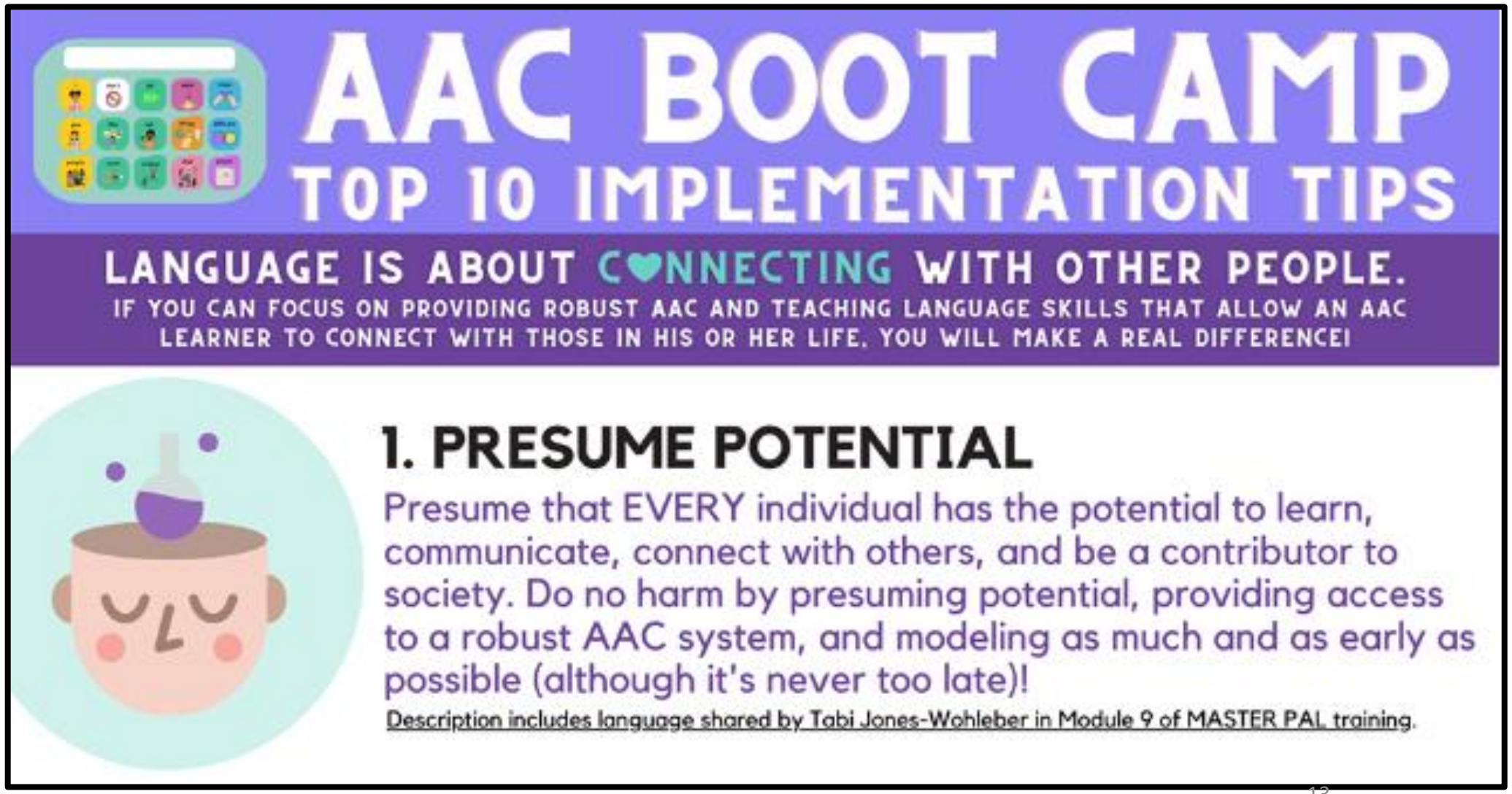
- Individuals shall honor their responsibility to hold paramount the welfare of persons they serve (**ASHA** Code of Ethics Principle 1)
- Individuals shall honor their responsibility to the public when advocating for the unmet communication and swallowing needs of the public (**ASHA** Code of Ethics Principle 3)
- Occupational therapy personnel shall promote equity, inclusion, and objectivity (**AOTA** Code of Ethics Principle 4)
- Hold paramount the welfare of persons served professionally (**RESNA** Code of Ethics)
- Maintaining challenging expectations for individuals with exceptionalities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes and quality of life potential in ways that respect their dignity, culture, language, and background (**CEC** Professional Ethical Principles 1

Communication is everyone's responsibility

- OTs are not always invited to the table to address communication needs
- Some may be unaware of what OT has to offer not only for positioning and set up (considering visual perception, sensory needs/concerns, range of motion, level of effort required to sustain attention and physical response), but for the holistic approach and mental health aspect that forms the root of the profession



Presume Potential!



This we know…

Assessment and follow through take a village

Lessons from COVID:

- Many persons with disabilities have been cut off from friends and families, as well as education, work, and recreation education in traditional settings
- There are instances where communication supports have been setting specific (for example, classrooms with specific positioning and communication devices are shared, or worksites where customized communication technology has been provided) and not as easily accessible during distance learning and/or telecommuting.
- Familiar care providers have not been always able to provide ongoing services and supports.
- Some individuals with disabilities and their families face unique challenges in participating in and benefiting from services delivered via tele-practice.
- Masks alter communication and present barriers to communication success while feeling aversive to some.

What you can do right now

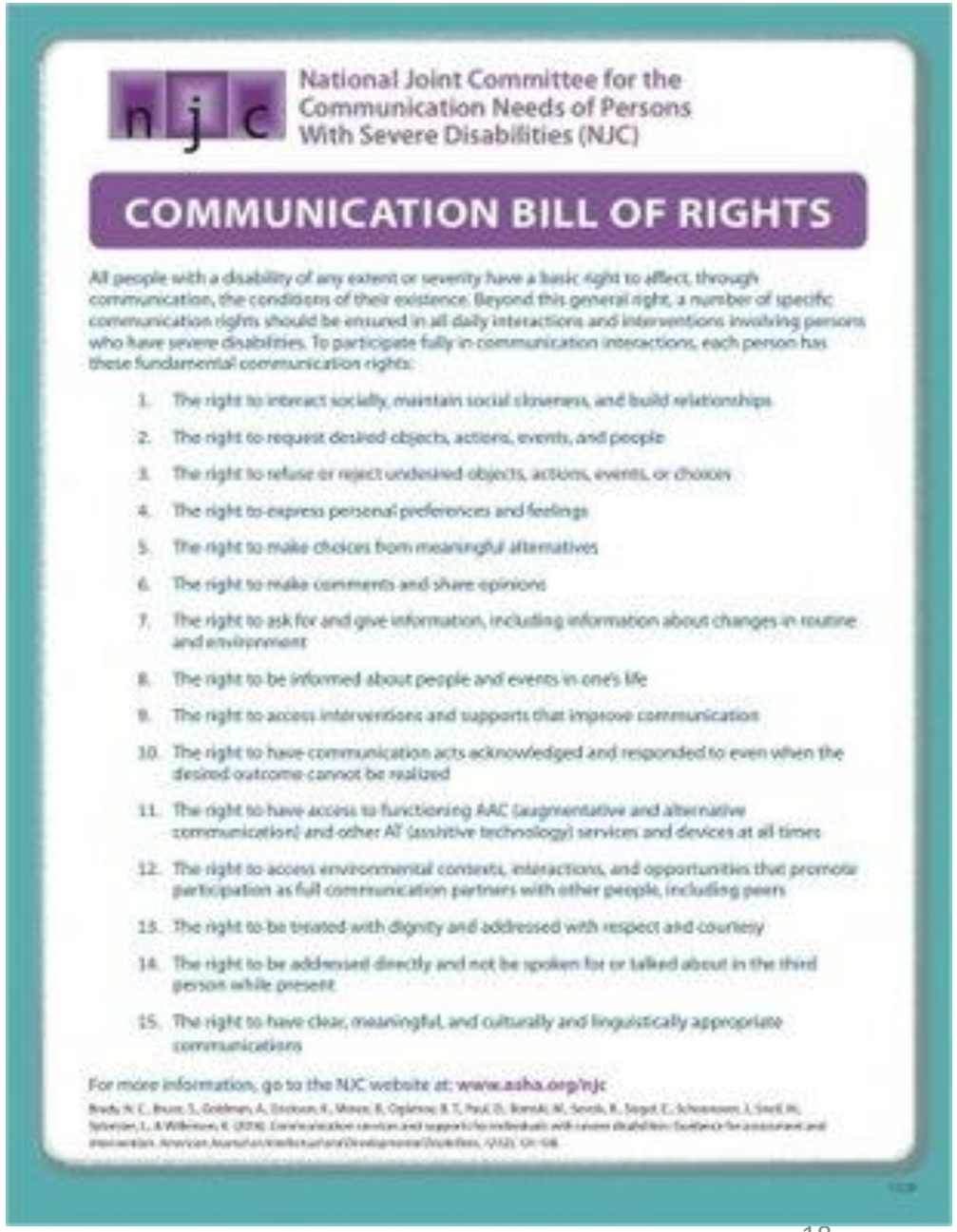
Help persons communication difficulties and their support system understand and advocate for their communication rights.

- Talk about communication rights using systems that best support comprehension.
- Provide specific examples that are relevant to the lives of the individual.
- Become so familiar with the rights that you can explain them and relate to them in the moment.

Solutions

Some steps that we can take to promote the communication rights of AAC users in this moment and moving forward include:

- **Review the Communication Bill of Rights and distribute it widely.**
  - Post it on social media outlets.
  - Draw attention to it when it is posted in common areas.
  - Share it with families, caregivers, and service providers.



National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons With Severe Disabilities (NJC)

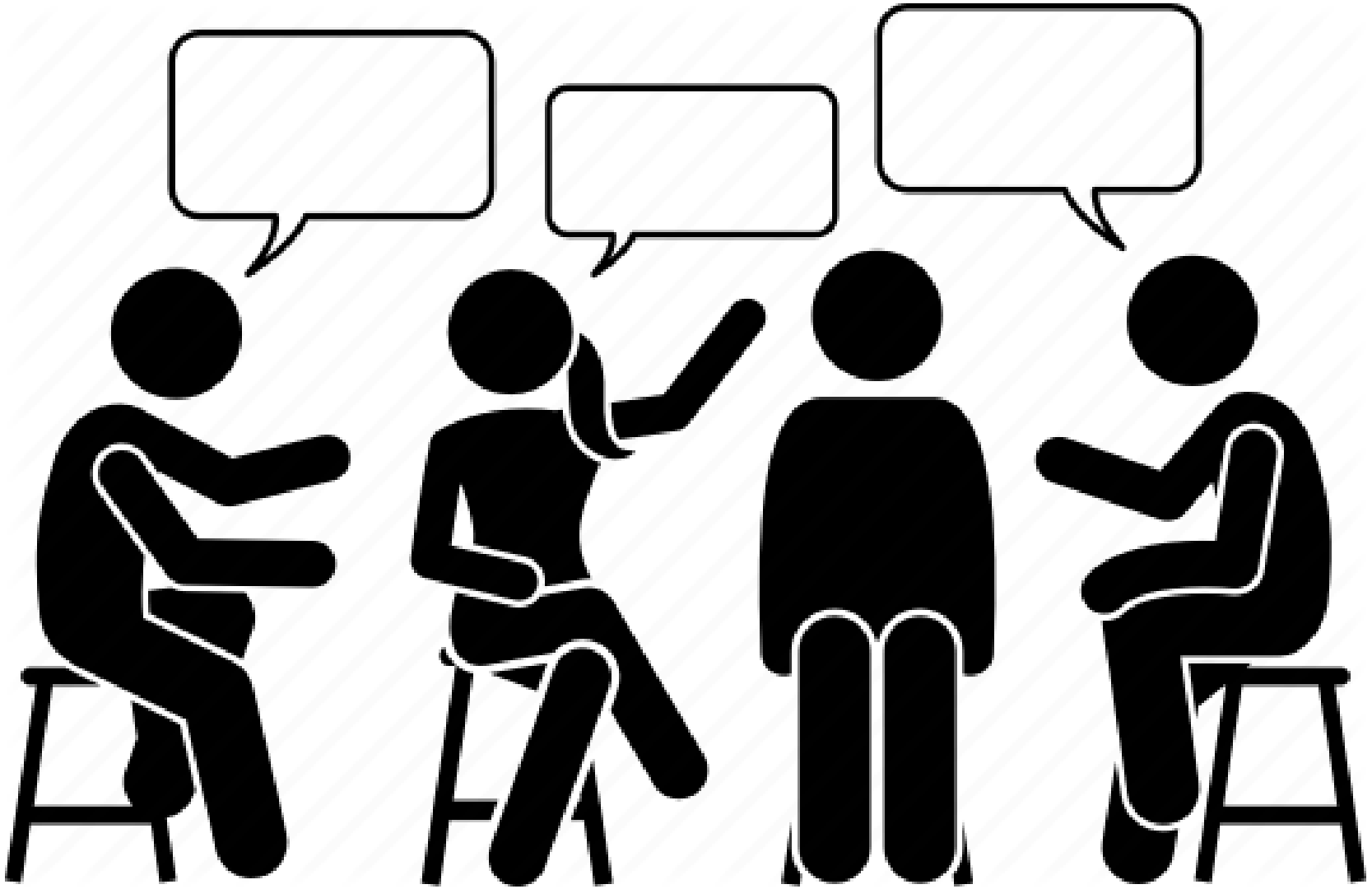
COMMUNICATION BILL OF RIGHTS

All people with a disability of any extent or severity have a basic right to affect, through communication, the conditions of their existence. Beyond this general right, a number of specific communication rights should be ensured in all daily interactions and interventions involving persons who have severe disabilities. To participate fully in communication interactions, each person has these fundamental communication rights:

1. The right to interact socially, maintain social closeness, and build relationships
2. The right to request desired objects, actions, events, and people
3. The right to refuse or reject undesired objects, actions, events, or choices
4. The right to express personal preferences and feelings
5. The right to make choices from meaningful alternatives
6. The right to make comments and share opinions
7. The right to ask for and give information, including information about changes in routine and environment
8. The right to be informed about people and events in one's life
9. The right to access interventions and supports that improve communication
10. The right to have communication acts acknowledged and responded to even when the desired outcome cannot be realized
11. The right to have access to functioning AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) and other AT (assistive technology) services and devices at all times
12. The right to access environmental contexts, interactions, and opportunities that promote participation as full communication partners with other people, including peers
13. The right to be treated with dignity and addressed with respect and courtesy
14. The right to be addressed directly and not be spoken for or talked about in the third person while present
15. The right to have clear, meaningful, and culturally and linguistically appropriate communications

For more information, go to the NJC website at: www.asha.org/njc

Let’s discuss…



Contact us:

Tracy Rackensperger, Ph.D.
trackens@uga.edu
http://www.ihdd.uga.edu

Nicole Tripp, M.S., CCC-SLP
ntripp@speak-yourself.com

Judith Schoonover MEd, OTR/L, ATP, FAOTA
jchoonover93@gmail.com
@JudithSchoonov3

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https://aacdisasterrelief.recovers.org/

AAC Disaster Relief

Community Admin

This site supports individuals who use AAC so they can re-establish their communication. The United States Society for Augmentative Communication (USSAAC) manages the site and is currently focused on the aftermath of hurricane IRMA.

I Have A Need

Get assistance:
connect with the goods and services you need.

I Want to Give

Send supplies:
connect with people who need them.

I Want to Volunteer

Lend a hand:
connect with people who need your help.

Locate or suggest donation centers, shelters, and other recovery resources:

Find Resources »

Emergency Information

Emergency: 911

Edit Info | Post Documents

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Update Slideshow

Community Updates

Post Updates

Welcome to AAC Disaster Relief for Hurricane Irma Edit

posted 1 day ago by **CERV** from **Community Emergency Response Volunteers of the Monterey Peninsula**

No comments yet • Labels: hurricane irma aac ussaac communication needs

This site assists people with severe speech and language disabilities who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) to enable them to communicate. We are focusing on the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. Help us get the word out!

Individuals who use AAC and their family members can request help or sign...

Read More

New Site added to address needs of people who use AAC and their family members impacted by Hurricane Irma Edit

Thank you!

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Next webinar:

April 28th, 2021

Diversity in AAC Apps and Perspectives on Diversity

Jill D'Braunstein, M.A., CCC-SLP

Christina Royster, EdD,CCC-SLP

Alma Partida, M.A., CCC-SLP

Yoosun Chung, Ph.D.

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CONNECT
AUGMENTING OUR NETWORK
AUGUST 9 - 12, 2021