Presume Competence: Therapy for the Child who Needs Assistive Technology

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Session Objectives

• Presume Competence
• Identify types and strategies of communication, mobility and places where they intersect
• Define components of assistive technology needs assessment
Session Objectives (cont.)

- Describe methods to assess and increase patient’s communicative intent
- Describe methods to incorporate assistive technology and augmentative and alternative communication into treatment sessions

Why Do We Communicate?

- Expression of wants/needs
- Information transfer
- Social closeness
- Social etiquette
- Internal dialogue
Why Do We Move?

- Exploration
- Expression of wants and needs
- Social closeness
- Social etiquette
- Pushing and defining boundaries

Isolated versus Concurrent?

- Choice making
- Participation
- Socialization
- Development
Concept of Disability

- World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability as a combination of impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.

- Impairment: problem in body function or structure
- Activity Limitation: difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action
- Participation Restriction: problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations
Activity Limitations

- Decreased or ineffective mobility
- Decreased or ineffective communication
  - Reduces experiences/exploration
  - Changes interactions
  - Alters exposure

Reasons for Considering AT

- An absence or decrease in movement or communication has more impact on the whole than the absence of the individual parts
- Cognition, Language, Fine and Gross Motor
- Socialization
- Participation
- Integration
Considering AT (cont.)

- Presume Competence-
  - AT can provide the expression of what is lacking
- AT Perceptions

Considering AT (cont.)

- Quote from AAC User, Paul Marshall

To communicate is like breathing air in and out. It is impossible not to do. It is the heartbeat of our own existence! It is the cornerstone upon which everything is built. Take away communication, we are nothing; we are prisoners within our own bodies!
Considering AT (cont.)

“Everywhere we look in society, we are bombarded with images of wheelchairs as things that hold people back. Your fears are just a product of what you’ve been told. Well, I’m telling you to forget what you’ve been told. I have had a wheelchair for all of my life and it has done anything but confine me. It is my freedom to move and to determine where I am going next. It has allowed me to zip around a college campus on my own, to go shopping, to go to museums, and to decide where I would like to be rather than let someone else decide for me” - Kathleen Downs

AT Needs Assessment

- Goals of Assessment
- Considerations
  - current and future needs
  - current AT strategies
- Match Assistive Technology to the user
Goals of Assessment

- High Expectations
- Toolbox of solutions
  - Multi-contextual
  - Multi-modal
- Team Approach
- Education of caregivers

AT Assessment Pitfalls

- Matching the user to assistive Technology
- Done in isolation
- Singular in nature
- Fully criterion based
Strategies for the Emerging AT User

- General Guidelines for implementation
- Maintain high expectations
- Create opportunities for success rather than meeting criteria for advancement
- Motivating activities
- Context Matters

SUCCESS
what people think it looks like

SUCCESS
what it really looks like
Intent

- Observation
  - Visual Cues
  - Alternating Gaze
  - Signaling persistently
  - Changing the signal quality
  - Ritualizing or conventionalizing communicative forms

Intent

- Ask appropriate questions
- Allow sufficient response time
  - Use of AT is slow and effortful, which creates tension from its inefficiency
  - Increased attention demands
Strategies for Implementation

- Do it early
- Do it often
- More practice = more opportunities to learn

Case Study
Questions ??

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References


