

AACtive AACcessible Communication

Abstract

Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) Systems are important for individuals with limited or no speech. AAC Implementation is a team approach with the contribution of Speech and Language Therapists, Assistive Technology Specialists, Special Educators, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and most importantly the individual and their family.

The workshop will introduce the concept of AAC with a special focus on the SETT framework (Zabala, 1995)- the process and guidance that will provide the team members to understand the individual, their needs, environments, and design appropriate tools.

Audience: Beginner/ Intermediate

Pre requisites:



Participants will be offered a virtual library to click and access material related to the workshop.



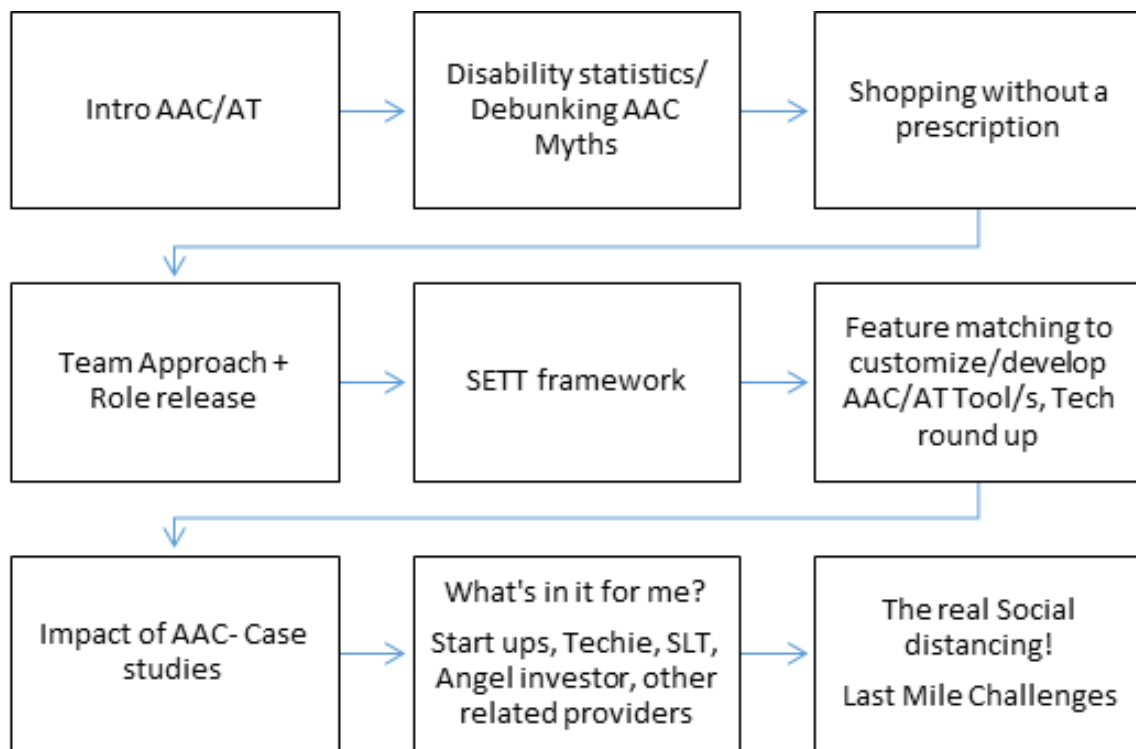
Selected apps to be downloaded on Android/iOS platforms for immersive AAC experience.

Introduction

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is an area of clinical practice that compensates for impairments in speech-language production and/or comprehension, including spoken and written modes of communication. AAC falls under the broader umbrella of assistive technology, or the use of any equipment, tool, or strategy to improve functional daily living in individuals with disabilities or limitations (ASHA). As per Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 Cr population, about 2.68 Cr persons are 'disabled' which is 2.21% of the total population. 7.5% of the disabled have speech impairments which includes a range of communication disorders 85.2% of whom cannot speak, uses only single words and/or speaks unintelligibly.

Historically, AAC intervention was considered a "last resort" for individuals who did not develop functional speech. Speaking autistic adults encourage families, professionals, and society to promote and accept all communication as equal—ensuring opportunities for all children to develop full and rich communication without delay and without stigma (ASHA). Everybody deserves a voice and Augmentative and Alternative Communication should be an available option and every AAC user deserves the same access to society as a speaking individual.

Workshop flow:



Takeaways/Outcome: The workshop hopes to inspire startups to create affordable communication apps which can be accessed by the wider population. We also hope researchers in the field of Speech and Language Pathology will conduct more research in the area of augmentative and alternative communication and closely partner developers and end users.

Participation statement: Vinu Johnson, Regina Ramdas and Elizabeth Saju- representatives of Al Noor Training Centre hereby declare our willingness to participate and present the workshop entitled “AActive AAccessible Communication” in EMPOWER 2022, IITM.

A brief description of each facilitator’s background, including expertise related to the topic

Vinu Johnson: Vinu Johnson is a licensed Senior Speech Language Pathologist and Assistant Head of the Department of Communication, Language and Speech, at Al Noor Training Center for Persons with Disabilities, Dubai, UAE. He has over 11 years of experience in Pediatric speech and language disorders. His area of expertise is in

Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC). He is an expert speaker and a sought upon resource person in the area of AAC intervention.

Regina Ramdas: Regina Ramdas is qualified Senior Assistive Technology Specialist at Al Noor Training Centre, Dubai, UAE. She has 15 years of experience in the area of AAC-AT and has been an expert speaker on AT assessments and Framework with NISH, Trivandrum for the last two AT courses.

Elizabeth Saju: Elizabeth Saju is a licensed Senior Speech Language Pathologist at Al Noor Training Centre, Dubai, UAE. She has over 11 years of experience in Pediatric speech language and disorders. Her areas of interest include evidence-based practices in speech and language intervention, dysphagia, Alternative and Augmentative communication (AAC), and cleft palate speech.

Logistics – Projector, connecting cables, AV system

References

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (n.d.). *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* (Practice Portal). Retrieved July, 1, 2022, from www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Augmentative-and-Alternative-Communication/.

Zabala, J. S. (1995). The SETT framework: critical areas to consider when making informed assistive technology decisions. Houston, TX: Region IV Education Service Center. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED381962)

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