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AAC and Adults with Developmental Disabilities, Part 2 Recorded February 13th, 2020

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SpeechPathology.com Course #9162

- [Moderator] Again at this time, it is a pleasure to introduce Rebecca Eisenberg, who is going to be presenting AAC and Developmental Disabilities Part Two. Rebecca is a certified SLP since 2001. She is also a certified autism specialist and a children's book author. She graduated with an master's degree in Speech Language Pathology from Teachers College at Columbia University. Rebecca has been working in a variety of contexts since 2001, including day habilitation programs, public and private school, clinics, group homes, and private homes. She's currently on a tech team at WIHD in Valhalla, and consults with schools on how to implement AAC in the classroom and other contexts. Rebecca has been working with adults with DD, conducting AAC evaluations and training since she was a graduate student in 2000. So welcome Becca, it's great to have you with us today.

- [Rebecca] Well, thank you so much. I'm really excited to, to talk about all these great things today. We have a lot to cover, and I'm really excited to share all the information. So what we're gonna start off with is how I planned this presentation is that I wanted to build a foundation so that we can start with discussing different types of vocabulary, communicative functions, which I'll be talking about a lot, which is basically my Bible pretty much, because it's what I think about pretty much every day and all the time whenever I'm working with any of my clients, goal writing, and then one of the very popular topics is therapy activities, which I've gotten a lot of emails about, and I'm really excited to talk about that, so. Like we had mentioned before, this is a two part series, so the first part was talking more about evaluation, and if you wanna check that out, we did, it was more about, it was more of, it wasn't about therapy, it was more about assessment. But this course, we're gonna talk about the functions like I had mentioned before, and we're gonna touch on funding, 'cause funding is a big topic, but I will touch on it, vocabulary selection, which is very important, goal writing, and implementation with age appropriate activities. I'm also gonna talk about non-electronic and electronic therapeutic tools. The learning outcomes, at the end of this webinar you're gonna be able to list five communicative functions for adults with

complex communication needs and developmental disabilities, identifying three communication goals that target vocational and daily living, using a variety of different communication systems, and listing three different apps and three different non-electronic materials to be used during communication therapy with adults with developmental disabilities.

Okay, so I think we already went over my bio on this, it's just written here. One thing I can't stress enough is just how passionate I am about working with adults using AAC, and all this, all of the information I'm gonna discuss with you today is something that I do every day, and I have been working with adults for, I would say almost, you know, for about 20 years plus. So you know, I've done a lot of trial and error, I've had a ton of different types of materials. I've also created materials and I'm excited to share them today. So just some quick financial and nonfinancial disclosure. I do have some games in a workbook that was published by Super Duper that I get royalties from. I also have three children's books that I receive royalties from, not related, a Teachers Pay Teachers account, and I do just wanna mention, it's not on here, that I have an Etsy store as well. But I have no other financial disclosures to disclose at this time. This is my contact information. Really, feel free to email me, I love getting emails because I always think of us as a community, and we need to help each other and share information. I've had so many people help me, and I love helping other people, and that's how we get great ideas is by collaborating, so really, feel free to email me with any questions or comments.

So I always start off with this slide, and I also, I teach a lot of graduate classes and I just can't say this enough, and I just wanted, I really want to start out with the fact that empowerment is key, because what happens a lot with adults is they graduate from high school, and you know, the learning just sort of stops there. So we have to still continue to believe in our clients and their abilities, and that we should continue to teach them after 21. So whether that's literacy, language, I have so many adults that

have grown so much, both with their communication, with their academics, and it's just, it's never too late to start learning. So, and having that confidence in our adults is also so important, 'cause, like many of you know, a lot of adults with complex communication needs, a lot of people don't really, they don't, let's say they haven't been properly assessed, and so we have to assume competence. That was more in Part One about assessment. This is also something I really believe in, is focusing on their chronological age, and not developmental age, so meaning that if somebody is 25 years old, we wanna do activities that focus on something that would be age appropriate, and not babyish, and this is something I'm gonna be kind of reiterating throughout the hour, because it really also has to do with motivation. You know, a lot of our clients are not being motivated to do things that aren't age appropriate, and so there's a lot of great materials out there that are very age appropriate that can meet your communication needs, and you'll find that it's just, it also helps carry over into their environment as well.

So like, I mean, I'm just kind of reiterating this again, we wanna treat them like adults, and we don't wanna use babyish activities. So the first thing I'm gonna be talking about is communicative functions, and if there is anything I think that we get out of this hour, it's talking about these functions and the handouts is available, you could download that. This is pretty much the basis for how I create goals, how I work, all the different things I work on in my therapy. This is stuff I think about all the time, not just even during therapy. Even when I'm having conversations with my clients, I'm always thinking about communicative functions, and I'm also, this is also something I'm also using during staff training, parent training. So this is sort of, I think probably such a valuable handout here, and on the left column here is those lists of functions. I think what happens a lot is that our, a lot of our clients get stuck in this requesting, that they're just requesting food. They see their device maybe as a way to request food, or they're using it for one or two things. What I want to work on today is the fact that we need to use it for lots of different functions of language, is that requesting is just one of

them. As you see, one out of a lot. I also wanna talk about just the term complex communication needs, 'cause I don't know if everybody knows what that means. That means anyone who is limited with their speech for communication, so that could include somebody who is minimally verbal, that could be somebody who is nonverbal. That could also be somebody who is unintelligible. You can't understand what they're saying. I also work with clients who are pretty verbal, but they're not meeting all their communicative functions verbally, so maybe they could get their needs and wants met, but they can't have conversations and they can't really express their opinions or ask questions. I'm gonna be, we may be, refer back to this throughout the lecture, but I'm gonna be going back to it when we talk about goal writing, when we talk about vocabulary selection. These are just things that we wanna consider because when we want, when we're creating vocabulary, we wanna think about how we're using that vocabulary.

So like I said, we don't wanna stuck on requesting, moving beyond that, and we also need to consider how we're using communication with all different partners. What I've seen in my many years of working with adults is that they'll be used to working with one particular person with their communication system, but then when we take that communication system out of that particular room or with that particular person, the communication is just not happening, and I've seen this time and time over again. Also, different contexts. So sometimes what I'll do is I'll actually take the communication outside of the therapy room, and maybe we'll go talk to somebody else in a different room, or we'll just go downstairs and be able to engage in some conversation to realize that we need to use this system with other people and in different contexts as well. When I talk about real functional communication, I mean conversation. The biggest thing is initiating communication, and I see a lot of adults that don't initiate communication, and we can't really talk about conversation without initiation, because if we don't initiate, how are we're gonna have a conversation? Asking questions, sharing information, and answering questions, which I think answering questions, a

little bit more, a lot of people, a lot of my clients, they could definitely answer questions, but I find that a lot of people have trouble initiating the communication.

So, and we need to consider those purposes of communication. So we talked about the sharing information, but social closeness, I mean, I was have a conversation yesterday with a parent of an adult talking about well, who are their friends? Who comes over? How could we get them to develop some friendships with other people? So we need to work on initiating communication, we need to work on conversation because we can't, without conversation, we, you know, it's hard to develop that social closeness. Then of course proper etiquette, when we get into community, work environments, we do have to have proper etiquette, and then expressing needs and wants, also, being used for goal writing and AAC implementation. So you'll see a little bit later in the presentation how we incorporate our communicative functions into goal writing. So communication is everywhere. I just can't reiterate this, that, I'm sure other people have also felt the same, that when, you know, maybe they're bringing their device to therapy, but they're not using their device anywhere else. So this is a really big issue, because we need to get them to be able to use their device everywhere. So we're one person, but getting them to use it in the group home, getting them to use it with their parents, getting to use in a day habilitation program or if they're working or they're shopping.

So how do we get there? We get there by training. We also get there by family involvement and family support, because it takes a village to, and the most important thing, obviously, is the user themselves. So this is, all things considered, we need to increase the carryover for sure. So we're gonna start with vocabulary selection, and I think this is where people get stuck a little bit, is how am I, how do I select the vocabulary for this particular adult, where do I start? Just to let you know, too, when we go into the different vocabulary selections, there is a lot of ways to combine all these different vocabulary selections, so it's not like you're just choosing one over the

other. So we're gonna get into it a little bit, but let's just say you think visual scenes are really important and really helpful for your adult that you're working with, doesn't mean that you can't also have core and fringe on there as well. So meaning, I just kind of wanna give you a broad overview of what's out there, and then this is also given that the person has gone through an AAC assessment, and a comprehensive AAC assessment to determine what, let's say communication app they're using, what speech-generating device they're gonna be using, but then, so we're gonna continue with this. Also, to talk about that, thing could be no tech, low tech, or high tech. I am gonna be talking mostly about high tech during the lecture, but I don't want people to forget how important no tech and low tech could be.

So communication forwards don't break down, we, you know, we could lose a forward, but it doesn't break down. It's also great, let's say, if you're going to the beach or you're going, let's say, out to a place that maybe, or if the device is not available, it's a backup system. So we also don't wanna forget about the picture exchange communication system, and lo tech devices that we're not gonna have time to talk about today that much, but there could definitely be useful. So choosing the right vocabulary for the AAC user. So these are the different, I kind of broke it down into different types of the vocabulary selection. So we have our core and our fringe, which I'll go over in a couple of minutes, a little, just for a couple of minutes. We have phase-based vocabulary, which is important for quick and easy communication, definitely important for our adults, because when they're in a work environment, they're out in the community, they need to communicate quickly and easily. Context based, meaning more like topic-based communication, and I'm also gonna show you an example as well, but let's just say a page of phrases related to the mall, so that when they go into the mall, they could just go ahead and just use that one particular, that one page. Visual Scenes that you could set up with hotspots, and then we have people who are just, who are spelling on a keyboard. But like I said, we could combine into all these different things, 'cause let's say on TouchChat with WordPower, you could have

a visual scene, you could have phrase-based vocabulary, you could have core and fringe, you could even set up context-based pages if you wanted to.

So, and this link right here is a PDF that I found at the wonderful Bridge School website, and that is for parents to fill out for vocabulary selection because we don't, a lot of times, we wanna get the vocabulary from the parents. What do they like, what shows do they watch? What are their favorite games? Who would like, could you tell me the names of their family members? This is stuff that we need to add into their communication system. It's really, it's sad when we go and I go into someone's communication system and nothing is personalized for them. So we wanna make sure to personalize that vocabulary, because even the about me page, this is stuff, what do they love? So this is important, this is very important. So just to give a little bit of an overview on core and fringe for anyone who is not familiar with core and fringe, I'm gonna mention a lot. Core vocabulary is a small amount of words across different contexts, high frequency. Could be different parts of speech and is 80% of what we communicate. It includes words like like and go and eat and drink.

So I could say the word eat in any environment that I'm in. I could say it if I'm sitting in my office, I could say it if I'm out to lunch. So fringe vocabulary is a large amount of words. It's mostly nouns, it's usually nouns, limited context, low frequency, and it's 20% of what we communicate. So let's say the word french fries is fringe, okay. So if I say french fries, that, you're just thinking of french fries, but if I say, "I eat french fries," I and eat are core, and fringe is french fries. So one of the things that I'm always working on is to try to get the people I'm working with, my adults that I'm working with as well as with the children is to use more core. A lot of times, people are using a ton of fringe, McDonald's, let's say, but they're not using a sentence, "I go to McDonald's, I like McDonald's, "I want McDonald's." So here are some examples. There's lots of different communication apps out there, but some examples of communication apps with that core, the core vocabulary, TouchChat with WordPower, Proloquo2Go, Speak

for Yourself, LAMP, Snap and Core First, Grid. There's definitely more out there for sure. These are the ones that I mostly use. So we have our Core Board for LAMP right here, and I'm just gonna take my pointer over here, but as you see, these are all core: work, light, play, all, comes, do, go.

So that's important, it's all on our main board, and we could go ahead and communicate pretty quickly. This is Topic Based, and this is Snap and Core. So over here, you'll see this is an appointment communication board, and you have some phrases over here for anyone who can't see. "I need an appointment," "I need a pen," "I need my paperwork, insurance card." So even though it'll label, let's say insurance card, you could put a whole phrase there for it to say. That's important when you're in an appointment, to be able to communicate very quickly. This is in, this under Grid, this is a page set for Grid, it's just Topic Based Vocabulary for Life, which is another page set that I use a lot with my adults. It's, you'd have to check it out but I don't have any more pages. This is just a screenshot over here. But definitely more topic-based, so drinks, that would be the topic, but when you open it up, it does have the ability to use some core and fringe in here as well. This is more topic-based from Snap and Core, and so over here, this is fast food. So you know, over here this says, "drive through," this may say, "I am a vegetarian," this could say, "It smells good," or "I love this," so that's what I mean by topic-based. This is just something I put in the slides because I think it's important, is that we also need to look at other ways sometimes, maybe having a talker. Sometimes people may, let's say, not, like they may leave it behind or they left it at home.

One thing that's also, could be very effective is a smartwatch, and another product that I also have been looking at lately is a Talk Tablet which also has a watch available as well. A lot of my, a lot of adults could find this very accessible. They could put some, like a downloaded communication app on their watch, and they could put some phrase-based vocabulary, it could be very functional, let's say in addition to using their

communication device. Visual scenes is what I talked about before. So a visual scene is just a picture, but what you could do is you could add hotspots. So over here, I may put a hotspot over here that says, "I would like to buy some apples," and then maybe in the background over here, "I would like something to drink." So you could put phrases, you could also put just single words, and there are some apps that have visual scenes available, like GoTalk NOW PLUS is an app that has a lot of visual scenes, let's say TouchChat with WordPower also has visual scenes as well as Snap and Core First. There are some that do have it, there are some that don't, but that is part of the assessment as well. So we're just gonna go through a little bit just to kind of, I have some links for videos where obviously you could check them out afterwards, but I just wanted to go through just some vocabulary for some situations.

So let's just say you're working with a client, a adult with developmental disability, they go to college, they are literate, so just different things to consider. So you definitely need a communication device with a keyboard and other features. You may need core vocabulary. You definitely need access to the internet, and let's say that particular student should not be limited with their vocabulary. So you know, if you were working with an adult like that, you would wanna make sure to have also different, a lot of, I would say, also a lot of assistive technology as well. Now a lot of our adults with developmental disabilities volunteer, so that's the other thing. You wanna think about what vocabularies they need for volunteering. So what are they volunteering for? What organization are they volunteering for? What kind of vocabulary do they need? So this is the information you may wanna get from, let's say, the day program that they're going through, or maybe if they're, let's just say, volunteering at a shelter, so maybe you wanna get in touch with someone from the animal shelter and ask them, what are their responsibilities, who are they communicating with?

So that would also be some really important vocabulary to know about, because maybe we would wanna, we definitely would want to add that into somebody's talker

as well. So some of our adults will work in offices. I have worked in a day program where a lot of the adults that I work with, they go to an office once a week and they do some filing and they do some organizing. So these are the questions you might wanna ask, and the reason why this is important is because, not just for adding the vocabulary into their talker, but also about carrying it over into therapy. So if somebody is working in an office, we wanna role play those different scenarios in our therapy sessions. We also want to maybe focus our therapy activities around office. So let's just say for this particular client who has, who works in an office, maybe I would, maybe I'd play office bingo. Maybe I would create, on PowerPoint, a book about working in an office, and focusing in different vocabulary that has to do with working in an office. I would definitely be doing role playing if they're answering phones.

So, and phrase-based vocabulary could also be useful, because one of the things was, I had, I work with several people with different developmental disabilities, and the phrase-based vocabulary is really important because they be making phone calls, and maybe just doing the typing or just having one word at a time may not be very efficient. So we wanna consider having that phrase-based vocab. Quick and easy also has to be important, and then just, as far as them going to the office, getting that vocabulary from, let's say the staff members that are going with them and asking them what their responsibilities are, 'cause I find that a lot of times, people don't have the vocabulary, or maybe they have it, but they don't know how to use it. So that's why in therapy, we really need to focus a lot on how are we using that vocabulary, how are we role playing? But that also goes into staff training. So if there's any way to kind of, I don't know, I mean I know it's hard, but if there's any way to go along with them to the office one day and implement the communication that one time and show staff members how they're using that communication in an office situation, that could be very powerful.

So it's definitely something we need to consider. We also need to consider, a lot of times staff members do not know how to implement communication. There could be a high turnover, and we need to train those particular people on how to implement that communication. A lot of people don't know how to work with someone using a communication system. So that's something that we need to teach them as well. That's very, very important. So this is just some phrases, like sort of, some phrases that I have programmed in talkers before. "What is next," because a lot of times, they will finish a specific task, and then they will not know how to ask, "What is next?" A lot of times our clients don't ask questions, but they may be sitting around, they may be finished with something, but then they're dependent on somebody to tell them what's next. So this way they could initiate and they could ask what's next. "I need some help with this task," is also something very important. Now going back to the communicative functions, asking for help could be another great goal. Explaining what my next, "Can you explain "what my next task is?"

So a lot of times, it may be quickly given to somebody, and that person may not understand, so initiating and asking for more explanation. You know, talking about themselves, like what their name is, how they communicate is also important. "The machine is broken." Has anyone had a photocopier machine break on them? I have had that many, many times, and I have pretty always asked for help 'cause it's pretty hard to fix a photocopier machine. So this is something also that's important, "The machine is broken, can you please help me?" So that's also something we wanna have maybe in one, as one phrase. Then what phrases can you think of? So this just depends on the work environment. So this is something we would need to learn about where they're working and, as far as being there, would be really, really powerful so you could get that vocabulary. So a lot of our clients are in day programs. So what kind of day program are they in? Where are they going on a daily basis? We wanna have the names of the places that they're going for sure. We don't wanna program too many things, but a lot of times they're going to very specific places, and so if they don't spell,

it's important to have those specific places in their talker. What are the other individuals like in their class? Are they communication partners? Who do they talk to? Who do they have conversations with? One of the conversations I had yesterday was who can we practice conversation with in that day program? Can they communicate with anyone in their day program? We already kind of went over this, is the vocabulary available to them? I know we have some situations where an adult may not take their talker to day program, and that's always something, I say, to please don't give up. We have to keep trying, we have to get those people trained, and we have to get our adults to start using their talkers in day programs. Let's say going, a lot of my adults, they go on to, they go to the mall a lot.

So this is also something to consider is more phrase-based vocabulary, access to core and fringe. So we don't wanna make everything phrase-based, but we wanna have access to all different types of vocabulary. So let's just say you're in a mall. I mean, we wanna consider the functions of language again. Maybe they're requesting to go to a store. "I want to go to," I don't know, "Forever 21," or whatever it is. Maybe commenting, going into a store and maybe Best Buy and saying, "Ooh, I like that phone." So that's commenting, asking questions, "Can you help me," or, "Can I buy this?" So just a trip to the mall with an adult with developmental disabilities that uses AAC can be a wonderful opportunity to work on so much different communication. There's just so many comments that you could make when you're having an outing. So this is just, these are other phrases that I, "How much is it," "I need to find a fitting room," "Can you help me?" Employment, we already went over volunteering. I mean, volunteering, employment, it's pretty similar. Where are they gonna be employed and how does vocabulary differ from a store versus an office? That's something that we kind of already discussed. So we need to have that vocabulary in there. So let's just say somebody works in an office and they don't have the word photocopy machine. That's pretty important. Or they don't have the word scanner. We wanna make sure

that that vocabulary is in there for them, because it's hard for them to communicate if they don't have the vocabulary.

So this is an article that I wrote about involving parents of adult clients, and I really can't reiterate this enough about how important it is to get parents involved. So I would say pretty much most of my sessions with adults, the parents are there and they're involved. It's just, it's really, really important to get them involved because we want that adult to take their communication outside of the therapy room and to use it at home. A lot of times the parents that I work with actually train staff as well. They'll go into a day program, I have a parent who goes into the day program, he helps them there, he kind of shows them what we're doing to incorporate some better, more communication, also the group home as well. So like I said before, it takes a village. So the more people we could get involved and the bigger support network we have, the better it is, and the better results we're gonna have.

So here is different ways to help carryover. So if it's an insurance device, we can invite the vendor to come train staff, because that is part of what you're paying for with an insurance, Medicaid, Medicare communication device, a speech-generating device. The vendor is not an extra cost. So if you get something let's say through Saltillo, you could reach our PRC, you could reach out to them, and they could have a vendor come to the group home or come to the day hab program and train staff. Have a staff meeting about communication systems. I used to do a lot of staff training in a day program that I was at, and I brought it up to the director and I said, "We really need to get these staff on board, "we need, they need more training," and he was more than happy to set that up. Invite the parents in for a training, very powerful. A lot of times parents of adults could be a little disheartened and feel like, oh it's never, they're not gonna be ever, be able to really communicate or use their communicate system outside the therapy room. So it's important to get the parents involved. Pushing into

community activities so other staff can see how the device can be used is very, very powerful.

So you know, we wanna, let's say we have our adults come to us for therapy, but any opportunity we could push into an activity or push into any sort of community activity is just another wonderful opportunity to help train our staff. Funding sources for therapy, so how we get, and this does vary state by state, so I don't wanna, I wanna clarify that this is something you would have to check with. You don't want to just assume this, I'm in New York, so this, these are different funding sources for therapy. Medicaid is a good longterm funding source, Medicare, private insurance may cap it out. Some people do private pay, but the school district is no longer an option. So once you're 21 and you graduate, there is no more funding from that school district. Other factors, we had kind of already talked about this, and a lot of times staff will bring adults with them to therapy. We wanna try to get them to sit with us during therapy so they could see how we're using the communication systems, and I have given services at day programs and in group homes, so it really just depends on the funding sources as well. 'Cause a lot of people do ask me, well, could we get it at the group home or could we get it at the day program? Is it possible? Yes, depending on what state and what funding source. So now we're gonna get to goal writing, which I think is extremely important. I think that's one thing that people tend to struggle with a little bit, because how do we write a communication goal for that particular person? So these are just the things that we wanna consider.

So it definitely needs to be measurable, like we all know. It needs to be functional, and I just cannot explain this more, how important this is. So functional meaning that they need to be able to use, they need to be able to use their communication system, we need to make a goal that they're able to use it outside of therapy. So let's say a goal of, I don't know, being able to ask questions in conversation is very, very functional if it's appropriate for that particular person, asking for help, initiating communication. This is

something that is just important, it's a life skill, and we really, really wanna make this functional. We wanna make this useful in their daily life, because that's what it's all about, and focusing on communication, not so much on receptive language skills. Not to say we don't wanna have any receptive language goals, 'cause I'm not saying that, but really focusing on the communication, because that's really just, that's extremely important. I did talk before about across contexts. So you could have a goal that, maybe start out in the therapy room, but maybe as a longterm goal, that they're gonna be able to maybe initiate communication with a familiar communication partner such as yourself. Then we are going to initiate communication with a familiar communication partner outside the therapy room. Then we wanna initiate with maybe a less familiar communication partner in the community.

So that's a way of making a goal that's very functional and kind of changing it across contexts and with different people, but obviously we also wanna make that measurable. So when somebody graduates high school, they don't have an IEP anymore, they have something called an ISP, which is an Individualized Service Plan. Then I also don't wanna forget, 'cause it's also extremely important, is medical needs. Because if you did listen to Part One, I talked a lot about medical, because a speech generating device is a medical, it's for medical necessity, and it is considered medical equipment. So we also wanna consider how important this communication system is when they go to doctor's appointments, if they need medicine, anything medically related, it's extremely important. So we also wanna, we definitely wanna have those goals within there as well. I like this quote from Carrie Kane, and she talked about, what I love about this quote is that she talked about simple, straightforward, okay, I'm gonna use my pointer over here. Okay, "simple, straightforward, easy-to-measure goals." Then over here, "We must ensure that residents' "outpatient treatment incorporates staff training "on device care, maintenance, and programming. "Residents' successful use of AAC "is directly linked to the caregivers around them." It's just very, very true. We wanna make the goals simple and easy and very easy to

measure. We don't wanna get too fancy with the goals 'cause we want them to be functional, but this, what I love about this quote is that she talks about, we have to train the staff around them.

So we can't just think that they're gonna know how to do it, we have to train them. These are the other examples of goals that let's just say I have written for some of my clients. Ordering food at a restaurant. I'm gonna take my pointer over here. Ordering food at a restaurant via their communication system with intermittent prompts. So this is measurable over here. Engaging in one to two conversations via their talker during a structured exchange in a vocational context. So this is a person who's let's say working at the movies. So they, let's say they're working at the movies, they're taking care of a customer, and they need to have a one to two turn conversation with their talker. So that means that they need to introduce themselves and to, they use a talker, how could they help them? Maybe the person says, "I would like some popcorn," and then maybe your client is going to be, and respond, "What size," or, "This will cost you \$2," or more. So we wanna be able to have that two turn conversations 'cause if they ask them another question, and the person couldn't respond, that's definitely an issue that affects their job and their ability to do their job.

Over here, will greet unfamiliar conversation partners given intermittent prompts. This is also important because a lot of our clients don't greet. They can't verbally do it and we wanna teach them how to do it on their, how to use it on their talker, it's very important. Requesting help from the job coach via the talker, and initiating communication with a peer. I could write tons and tons and tons more goals, but these are just an example of different varying situations. So somebody who is, let's say, ordering food in a restaurant to somebody's who's working, to somebody who is asking for help and just greeting, 'cause that is something I am working on with some of my adults is just the greeting. Like I said before, I can't say this enough, carryover, carryover, carryover. Different partners, different environments, training staff. This is

another article I wrote about over-prompting, and I'm sure everybody has seen this as well. They will use, your client will use their talker, they'll put their finger towards an icon and they'll look at you.

So you wanna reduce prompting over time because we wanna get our adults to be using their systems independently. So modeling shouldn't end in school and this is more about aided language input, which is a link in right here. So that's also another way of reaching communication goals is that we need to model the language. So now we're gonna get to therapy. These are some non-electronic therapy activities. I use newspapers, I will create social stories for my adults, menus, I wrote, and there's a link in the, there is a link in this slideshow about, a link to ASHA, I wrote an article about using menus for therapy, and that's very motivating, and it's also great for literacy it's great for categorization, and it's also just very functional. Cards are another, maybe action cards or maybe anything from Teachers Pay Teachers that you download that may be age appropriate, age appropriate books, and I have, I think I have a picture on the next slide is, there's a lot from Attainment Company, which is very functional and I use a lot of their materials. They also have games, but I also, sometimes I use commercially used games, sometimes I used more therapy games, puzzles can be functional, magazines. A lot of my adult clients use magazines, we use magazines as a therapy tool. Bingo, I make tons of my own Bingo games.

So like I said before with the office Bingo, I have places Bingo, I have an entire, not suitcase, but it's an entire file box of all different Bingo games, because it's simple, it's different, and you could kind of create on your own. I use Board Maker, practicing conversation, music is another great therapy activity and it is definitely age appropriate, so, depending on what music you're choosing. The other thing that I also didn't mention here that I wanted to mention was the therapy activity of talking mats, and that's also something, it's on the iPad, but it's also a non-electronic therapy activity as well, and I have, I do use that a lot. So I wanted to mention that as well. Here

is more job interviews, shopping, definitely the ADL activities for sure, that's something, I use a lot of materials for retainment for ADL, so, and there's some, at the end of this slide show, there's definitely, there's some more, I think I had a picture of some of the books that I use.

Transportation-related activities are also extremely motivating, because a lot of our adults are out on the community. They're taking the bus, they're taking the car or their taking the van, and transportation-related activities are really, really important, so maybe having a Bingo game with different transportation or maybe making a social story of them going to the mall and having the sentences in there and working on getting them to comment about the pictures or getting them to answer questions or maybe even retelling. So there is just so many different ways to incorporate the different communication goals. So this is a topic board that I created. I just bought one of these from Staples, these books over here from Staples. Just put some Velcro, a sentence strip. I have my topics over here, I have my sentence starters over here, and then I have another page of just different topics. So dessert is extremely motivating, not only for me but for other people.

So I will ask them to choose a topic that they wanna talk about and then I'll say, "Well, what sentence starter do you wanna work with?" So let's just say they wanna do dessert, they'll put dessert up here and I'll say, "Okay, well which sentence starter "do you wanna start with?" They will use, let's say, "I buy, I buy dessert." "Okay, well tell me about what dessert you wanna buy." This is another goal of kind of maintaining conversation and also initiating a topic. So if they're taking off a topic and they're initiating, choosing a topic to talk about, that's another really functional activity. But within my topics, I also have age appropriate, like shopping, work, working, let's say working in an office, transportation is another choice. These are different books that I use, which you could see how used they are because I use them a lot. Learning to Work, I've used so many times, Focus on Feelings is also another great book, and I

just, if you go to Attainment, you will see that they have lots of different books. These are just really great favorites, age appropriate, great functional activities, books, materials, very visual, very functional.

So now we're gonna talk about electronic therapy activities, 'cause usually within my session, I will work on non-electronic and electronic. I really won't spend the whole time just on electronic or non-electronic. I'll pretty much split it up. So there is some apps that I recommend, but I'm also gonna list, if you have questions about more apps, in addition, Community Success I use all of the time, that's from Attainment. Read to Learn is from Attainment, Social Success from Attainment. I'm gonna go over here. Between the Lines is another great app out there. I have also used, just to add to that, About You and Me from Super Duper, Everyday Skills, another app to also use, to write down, is CanPlan, that I also use to make social stories. So, but at the end, I have a link to an article I wrote with all the apps that I recommend, but feel free to email me if you do want more recommendations for apps.

Oh, here it is, Everyday Skills Actions and Videos is also great. Model Me Kids is also great. Now, it's kids, but I do find their social stories to be pretty age appropriate, and I have a lot of adults that I work with that do like their stories. YouTube is a great resource. I love this, I love the channel Autism Goes. I use cooking videos a lot, Everyday Speech is another one, but they have some great social stories out there on YouTube, so you just have to subscribe and you have to follow them and ones that, I really love Autism Goes and the cooking videos. The sequencing you could work on, you could work on answering WH questions. So here are some other books online, "Tarheel Reader," and then this is another link to another library. There's also digital stories available via Teachers Pay Teachers. This is other articles that I've written about communication and adults with developmental disabilities, so if you wanna check that out, feel free to check this out. This one is about the apps that I was talking about. All those apps are pretty much available. I talked about the adult clients, talked about

speech and language goals over here using Disney, and I've also written a lot of articles on Friendship Circle, which also has some really nice resources as well.

So now we're gonna take the next five minutes or so going over the case studies, and then I think I'm going to be taking some questions. So the first case study is Case Study Number One. So 30 year old Caroline uses TouchChat with WordPower to communicate. She goes to a day program and works once a week bagging groceries in a supermarket. She struggles with quick communication because her ability to create sentences is laborious at times when she's on the spot. What kind of vocabulary might you add to help Caroline? So I, you know, what first comes to mind, and I'm sure you guys will have other ideas as well, is that Caroline needs some quick communication, she needs some phrase-based vocabulary to add to her page set, because maybe she's using just single words or maybe she's spelling a little bit, and she's not getting the communication across, 'cause communication is super quick, so if you don't get that sentence out within that moment, a lot of times, the opportunity is lost. So I also think, too, is to have that sentence, "My name is Caroline, "I use a communication system to communicate. "Please be patient while I tell you," you know, "while I ask you a question and while I tell you, "while I communicate with you."

So that's the first thing, too, because you wanna introduce, she wants to be able to introduce herself properly and asking someone to wait for a minute or two, adding that phrase-based vocabulary, but also in therapy, role playing, role playing. Let's say you're, let's say she's bagging and you're buying, and you're just kind of, you're setting that up and you're role playing. Then also incorporating goals into it as well. So Caroline will, let's say, engage in a two-turn conversation with a customer about the weather, or, Caroline will ask a customer a question, and then we wanna add those, make it measurable of course. So Case Study Number Two, 25-year-old Bill is an excellent communicator at his program, so I mean day program. However, when he is going to his work site, he struggles to communicate with less familiar communication

partners. What goal would you create to help Bill communicate more effectively? So Bill is what we call a context-based communicator, meaning, a context-dependent communicator, sorry, meaning that he is very comfortable communicating at day program, he's very comfortable communicating with his partners.

However, he struggles to communicate with less familiar communication partners, and he probably also struggles when he's going outside of his familiar context as the day program. So when I think, to mind, as far as a goal, 'cause he's probably already reached his goal of using it in the day program for one particular goal, but maybe we wanna get him to use it outside and use it at work. So one of the things that I'm just thinking for Bill is that this is somebody who I'd definitely want to go to the work site with, see what his responsibilities are, what he's struggling with, and make a goal, as far as using this in an office. But really it's hard to say, just to say, oh, well here we're gonna use it in therapy, I want you to go use it at your work site. I think one of the key things here is staff training, like what I said before is that we want to get the vocabulary, we wanna make sure it, maybe it's that he doesn't have the proper vocabulary for his work site, so you wanna make sure that that's intact, we wanna make sure that the staff member knows how to facilitate, and what's even better is if we could be there with Bill for maybe even one time, just to see what he is, what he needs to communicate so that we could take that information back to the therapy room and role play.

So as far as the goals go, it would, I guess it would be dependent on what he's communicating, but definitely using the words less familiar communication partners and maybe engaging, I don't really know what it is. It would have to be more specific. We'd have to know what he's struggling with to communicate to make very specific goals, but once you get that information, you'd be able to create those goals. So Bill, again, another Bill, 50 years old, he's been having many medical issues lately. However, when he gets to the doctor, he's also, he's having trouble communicating his

medical needs. To what goals might be appropriate to work on in therapy and how can you best carryover this goal so he can be successful?

So what are Bill's medical issues, the first thing I'm thinking of. Let's just say Bill is having a lot of dental issues. His teeth are bothering him, he's had a lot of cavities, he has to get a lot of teeth pulled out. So what I'm thinking is, what kind of goals? Well, Bill will be able to communicate medical needs related to, let's say related to his dental hygiene, and make that measurable. So maybe, Bill will initiate communication with the doctor to express his feelings, and making that measurable. Bill will be able to express pain via his communication system. So this is, I think extremely important because a lot of times we don't know how our clients are feeling. We don't know what's bothering them. So we also need to role play in therapy, we also need to incorporate making our therapy activities. I have tons of books about, let's say going to the dentist or a social story about going to the dentist or going to the doctor. So I'm gonna end right here 'cause I could keep going, and these are my references. I'm gonna take the last five minutes to see if there is any questions.

Okay, so the first question I have here from, is what apps do you use on Apple watches? So that's a really good question. It's really an up-and-coming type of thing with the Apple watches, and if you email me separately, I could get more information to you about that. I believe that there is, I think you have the ability to download, get GoTalk NOW, I'm not 100% sure, but I will definitely get that information to you 'cause I don't wanna give you the wrong answer, but that is a, that is something that is growing. Like I said, the Talk Tablet also has a watch available. So please email me and I'll get you more information about that.

So I've another question. I have a client who has been stuck in a discrimination phase with packs. Do you have any tips to help? Yes, I have been there myself, and I understand. I think that, it's just, you have to look, for me, I have to, motivation, so we

have to look at, are we using motivating vocabulary, do we need to be maybe using pictures, photographs inside of line drawings? Sometimes what I'll do also is, to desire it is also kind of tough, so I will also use a lot of error correction, because that is something that is not used enough, is that correspondence track, the error correction we wanna do, making sure that they're choosing the right icon. So we wanna make sure. I think sometimes that's not happening enough, so that's, I know, it's one of those tough things. But to me, that's always helped, is going back to be one desired, one less desired, to one undesired. Sometimes it's even being done in distracter icon. I've also changed from line drawings to photographs to see if that would help. That's some of my advice as well. Sometimes it's visual as well. So we wanna consider all those different factors.

I'm gonna go to the next question. What can we do to reduce prompt-dependency? I love that question, that's a really great question. So one of the ways we can reduce prompt-dependency I think is using more visuals, and also training other, I know I'm like a broken record with the training, but you know, working with parents to show them how to reduce the prompts, and staff members, so pausing, I would say using, just trying to think, for me, the biggest thing is using my visual supports, prompting, and using other strategies. Like if they'll look at me, I will not prompt them as well, or I'll use the prompt hierarchy, which I think is very, very helpful, which I don't have included in here, but definitely, if you wanna email me, I could email that to you, which is the prompting hierarchy, which I think is really important. I think people just get stuck and they don't get stuck with consistent prompting, and we just wanna be, it's also about being aware of it and reducing it down. If it's always consistent, maybe we wanna go down to just intermittent, prompting them every once in a while, and definitely giving enough time and pausing.

Do you have a, this is another question, do you have a specific strategy for teaching initiation? It always seems to be one of the most difficult function to teach. Yes, I can't

agree more, I cannot agree more about this. Teaching initiation, like I said, sometimes I will have, I will just, sometimes I will just wait and I will give visual supports, or a lot of times what I'll do is really not verbally prompt at all. I will just maybe, I will pause, and maybe I'll tap onto their device a little bit and use that the way to initiate, and I think one of things that we have to also think about with initiating is not doing everything for our clients. So a lot of times, our adults become very passive because they've never had to really initiate 'cause everyone does things for them. So we have to put them in the position to make choices, and to initiate. So like I was even saying with a parent yesterday, we need to just pause and wait, let him make a choice. Also, using more visual supports instead of verbally prompting all the time. For somebody who's literate, maybe just having those written choices down instead of just auditory all the time, or having their communication device, obviously you're gonna have it available in front of them, and you're gonna be using the visual supports on there.

Another question, how do you worked with kids who are nonverbal and cannot initiate question or comments independently? Modeling, modeling, modeling, this is the biggest thing we could do, the more efficient way to do it, it's the most evidence-based ways, aided language input modeling all of the time, as much as we could. We cannot get our kids and our adults to learn better than by modeling communication all the time. We're gonna be modeling initiation, we're gonna be modeling asking questions and commenting and encouraging them to comment. So that's what I would say for sure. Will vendors come in more than once to train families and staff at different times? It just depends on the vendor, but I would say yes. I wouldn't say all the time. They're not gonna come monthly, but I would say, if you want them to train the day program and you want them to train the group home, I would think that most of them would be very much available to be doing that, and that's something you would have to reach out to the vendor about, and I guess it's more specific to each person, but that would my answer.

How do you gather data when you're writing goals to be met at their workplace, go and observe or training others or self-reporting? That's a really good question as far as data. I mean, that is something, I guess you would have to be there to take the data as well, but as far as their goals, it could be something that you're training staff to do, that they're going to be able to do, but it is something you'd probably have to consistently be there with them to keep track of. So very good question. So it really depends on where you work and how much, what's your flexibility as far as going out in the community. I worked in a day program where I had the flexibility to take them out to lunch every day. So I could take data on ordering Chinese food, because I was with them ordering Chinese food every single time. So that really just depends on where you're working.

I'm gonna go to my next question over here. Sometimes our older persons with DD can develop macular degeneration which limits central vision and functional reading, any suggestions? You know what, I feel like that's a really good question, but we don't have that much time, so I'm gonna ask that person to email me separately, and we can have another conversation about that, because we have two more questions and I wanna get to those two more questions, and I think that it wouldn't be fair to answer the questions so quickly, and I think it's a longer response. So if that person could please reach out to me and we could have that discussion, I think there's a lot more to talk about for sure. It's a very good question. I would love the prompt hierarchy and the information on the Apple watch. Okay, so I will definitely get that to Kathleen.

What communication functions and types of AAC would you recommend focusing on for an emerging communicator or someone who's only using gestures to communicate? So I would say, initiating communication, I would say making choices, I would say requesting items and actions. I would also say requesting help and requesting medical needs is definitely where I would start, for sure. Our last question and then we're gonna finish up. I have students who work with Proloquo, however,

they are unable to identify the picture icon independently when given a target word, any advice? So I do work with a lot of clients that if you ask them to identify something, they can't find it, but if you ask them to communicate with it, they have no problem. So I guess that's the first thing I would do is I would ask them to communicate with it, if it was something like, I could just say something really motivating like the bus. They love riding the bus. When you ask them, "What do you wanna do next," they press on bus. But then if you say, "Could you show me bus," and they don't activate bus, it's a different, it's kind of a different task, so I think that's the first thing, but the other thing, too, is modeling, modeling, modeling. So a lot of times what I'll do is I'm just gonna model language. I'm not even ask them to identify anything. I'm gonna model, "I go on bus," "I like bus," and maybe not even ask them to respond at all, but I would say after everyone takes a little bit different amount of time, but you'll see, with the more modeling you'll do, they'll start using those icons more consistently. So I just can't say enough with aided language input and modeling, how important that is, any age, children, adults. So I think that's it, I think we're 104.

- [Moderator] Yes, okay, I agree, thanks. You did a great job taking all those questions at the end, but I just wanna say thank you, Becca, we really appreciate you sharing your expertise, and you can tell just much this means to you and how you love working with this population, and so we thank you for that. Thanks to all of our participants for joining us today. We always appreciate your time and look forward to seeing everyone again soon. Have a great rest of the day.