

Taking the Myths out of AAC Evaluations & Treatment

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GREETINGS EVERYONE!

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In This Webinar We Will

★ Examine research regarding AAC myths

- discuss AAC myths vs. realities
- past and present

★ Explore the effect of AAC myths on people with disabilities

- Interview with a family member

★ Discuss case examples

- Children and Adult Case Examples
- I am Groot?

The background is a deep purple and blue space scene. In the top left, there's a large planet with horizontal stripes. Below it is a smaller planet with a ring. In the top right, an astronaut in a white suit is floating, holding a long, thin, looping rope. In the bottom right, there's a large, cratered moon. The background is filled with numerous small white stars and larger, four-pointed starburst shapes. There are also some soft, wavy, light blue and purple shapes that look like nebulae or gas clouds.

1. AAC Myths

A glance at origins and history

AAC Myths Proven False by Research:

AAC is the last resort in intervention

AAC stops natural speech development

Children must have a certain set of skills to use AAC

AAC is only for children with intact cognition

Children have to be a certain age to benefit from AAC

There is a hierarchy of symbols from objects to words

<http://aacworkshop.pbworks.com/f/AAC05EarlyIntMythsRealitiesRomskiSevcik.pdf>

<https://us.tobiidynavox.com/pages/what-is-aac?tab=1>

The background is a deep purple and blue space scene. In the top left is a large planet with horizontal stripes. Below it is a smaller planet with a ring. In the top right, an astronaut in a white suit floats, holding a long, thin, looping tether. In the bottom right is a large, cratered moon. The background is filled with numerous small white stars and larger, four-pointed starburst shapes.

2.

Myths vs. Realities in AAC Evaluations

Experiences and Case Examples

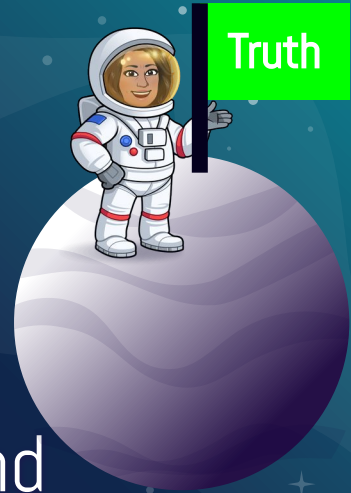
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Hi-Tech is the
best tech.

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ Low Tech solutions are successful
- ★ You can recommend both low tech and high tech
- ★ What does the AT user and family want? (SETT)



“

There are
prerequisites to
using AAC.

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ There are no prerequisites to using AAC
- ★ There is no disability disqualification meter when using AAC.



“

AAC is only for
persons who are
non-verbal

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ Persons with limited or some verbal skills can benefit from AAC.
- ★ It does not stop them from being verbal.
- ★ How do I document this?
 - ★ Case Examples



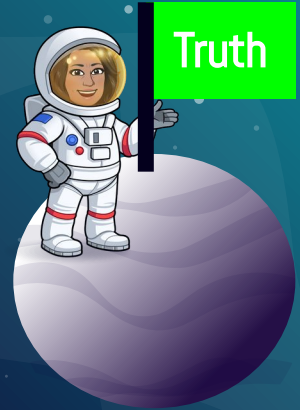
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Communication
starts with yes & no.

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ There are no prerequisites to using AAC
- ★ Mastery of yes/no questions is not expected before moving on to other types of communication in typical development of language



“

Communication only
occurs in the clinic.

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ Communication happens everywhere
- ★ What are all of the environments of the AAC user? (SETT)
- ★ Case Example MN Tech4Home

Truth



The background is a deep purple and blue space scene. It features several celestial bodies: a cratered moon in the top left, a ringed planet (like Saturn) in the top center, and a striped planet (like Jupiter) in the bottom right. Numerous white stars of varying sizes are scattered across the sky. On the left side, an astronaut in a white suit is floating, holding a red flag that says "Myth".

“
Communication
devices can only be
activated with the
hands.”

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ Some Alternative Access methods are:
 - ★ Switch scanning (do not need hands)
 - ★ Head Tracking
 - ★ Eye gaze with a switch
 - ★ Eye Gaze
 - ★ EMG signal
 - ★ Partner assisted Scanning



Truth

“
If a person is
mobile, they do
not qualify for an
AAC device

Myth

The Reality is



- ★ Mobility has no impact on the need to use an AAC device.

- ★ The decision to fund an AAC device is made on a person's inability to be understood.

- ★ Mobility directly affects how a person will transport their device.

The background is a dark blue and purple space scene. It features several celestial bodies: a cratered moon in the top left, a ringed planet (like Saturn) in the upper middle, and a large planet with horizontal stripes (like Jupiter) in the bottom right. Numerous white stars of varying sizes are scattered across the background. In the bottom left, an astronaut in a white suit is floating, holding a red flag on a black pole. The flag has the word "Myth" written on it in white. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, typical of a digital presentation.

“

If a person can use their
hands, they only qualify
for a touch device

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ An AAC evaluation is a “snapshot” in time.
- ★ Someone can use their hands, but still not have functional use of a communication device through touch.
- ★ Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- ★ Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMS)
- ★ Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- ★ Muscular Sclerosis (MS)



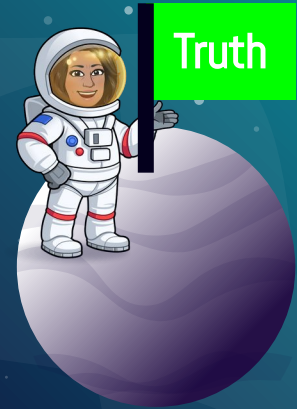
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An illiterate adult
cannot use an AAC
device

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ Literacy has no effect on a person's ability to use a low tech or high tech device.
- ★ Finding a symbol system that the AT user is comfortable with is key when working with someone who is illiterate.
- ★ Visual Scene Displays
- ★ Photographic and Pictographic Symbols



The background is a deep purple and blue space scene. In the top left, there's a large planet with horizontal stripes. Below it is a smaller planet with a ring. In the top right, an astronaut in a white suit is floating, holding a long, thin, looping rope. In the bottom right, there's a large, cratered moon. The background is filled with numerous small white stars and larger, four-pointed starburst shapes. There are also some soft, wavy, light blue and purple shapes that look like nebulae or gas clouds.

3.

Myths vs. Realities in AAC Treatment

Experiences and Case Examples

“

Getting an AAC
device will solve all
communication
breakdowns

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ An AAC device will not solve every communication breakdown.
- ★ It does not remove deficits.



Truth

“

Only the AAC user
needs device
training

Myth

The Reality is

- ★ Everyone on the support team for the student or person needs training.
- ★ Even those who are “tech savvy” need training.



Truth

The background is a dark blue space scene with various celestial bodies. In the top left, there's a grey cratered planet. Below it is a planet with a prominent ring system. In the bottom left, an astronaut in a white suit is floating, holding a red flag on a black pole. The flag has the word "Myth" written on it in white. The astronaut is connected to a coiled white rope. On the right side, there's a large planet with horizontal stripes. The entire scene is filled with small white stars and larger, multi-pointed starburst graphics.

“
Labeling

=

Communication

The Reality is

- ★ Labeling is a task for testing.
- ★ Labeling is **not** one of the communicative functions.



“

Myth

Communication is
stationary

The Reality is

- ★ Communication does not always happen at a desk or while seated at a therapy table.
- ★ Think of how much communication happens when a typically developing child is on the go.



Truth

The background is a dark blue and purple space scene. It features a large planet with rings (Saturn) in the upper left, a smaller cratered planet (Moon) above it, and a large striped planet (Jupiter) on the right. Numerous white stars of varying sizes are scattered across the background. In the lower left, an astronaut in a white suit is floating, holding a red flag.

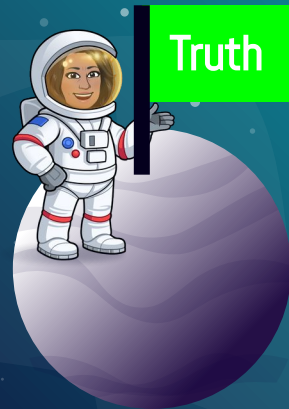
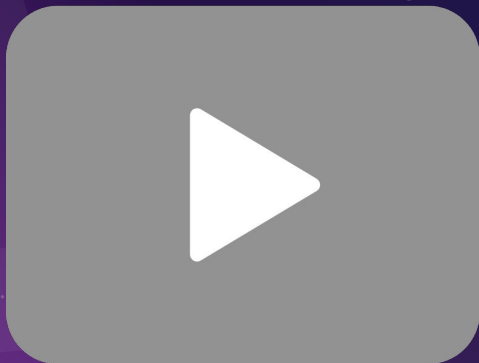
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Myth

The client has to be 100% accurate at using the trial device before submitting for funding or while using the device in treatment.

The Reality is

- ★ The act of communicating is not something to collect right/wrong data.
- ★ What type of data do you collect?





I am Groot...

Who is he?

What's the Comparison to
AAC use?

Ways to avoid “I am Groot” Behavior



- ★ Progress the user on to next steps with AAC.
- ★ Acknowledging when AAC is used.
- ★ Expanding on what the AAC user says.
- ★ Praising the AAC user appropriately

“

Any potential AAC user can get
the AAC resources they need
when they see a school based
therapist or go to a outpatient
clinic..

Myth



The Sad Reality is

- ★ AAC Myths directly correlate to persons with limited to no communication not getting appropriate help when they need it.
- ★ Cultural bias and discrimination does affect a persons ability to gain the appropriate help with AAC when they need it.



Truth

What can we do about it?

- ★ Dispel myths in your own practice
- ★ Speak up and educate others
- ★ Thatsunheardof.org
 - ★ Developed and supported by ASHA.
 - ★ ["Culture Covers More Than You Think"](#)



Resources

- ★ Lynch, K.A, (2013). Survey Reveals Myths and Misconceptions Abundant Among Hiring Managers About the Capabilities of People Who Are Visually Impaired. Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, 107(6), 408- 410. The original version of record can be found at: <http://www.jvib.org>.
- ★ <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/three-biggest-misconceptions-about-assistive-technology>
- ★ <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/assistive-technology/assistive-technologies-basics/video-5-myths-about-assistive-technology>
- ★ <http://aacworkshop.pbworks.com/f/AAC05EarlyIntMythsRealitiesRonskiSevcik.pdf>
- ★ <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/15185-assistive-tech-for-smbs.html>
- ★ <https://www.marvel.com/articles/comics/i-am-groot-he-is-groot>
- ★ https://praacticalaac.org/?wpfb_dl=291
- ★ <https://us.tobiidynavox.com/pages/what-is-aac?tab=1>
- ★ <http://joyzabala.com/> (SETT)
- ★ <https://www.asha.org/NJC/Communication-Bill-of-Rights/>
- ★ <https://www.thatsunheardof.org/siteassets/factoid-cards.pdf>

Thank you for joining!

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CREDITS

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- ★ Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- ★ Photographs by [Unsplash](#)