Taking the Myths out of AAC Evaluations & Treatment

AbleNet Inc.
March 2001

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?

1.
AAC Myths

A glance at origins and history

AAC Myths Proven False by Research:

AAC is the last resort in intervention

AAC is only for children with intact cognition

AAC stops natural speech development

Children have to be a certain age to benefit from AAC

Children must have a certain set of skills to use 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

2.
Myths vs. Realities in AAC Evaluations

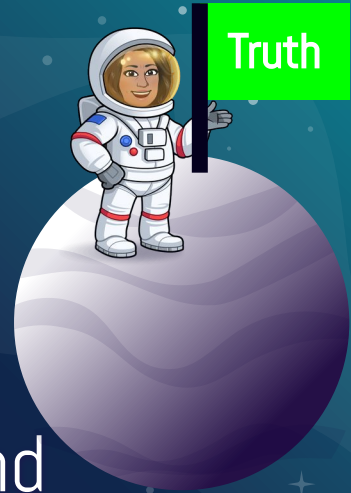Experiences and Case Examples

"

Hi-Tech is the best tech.

Myth

Truth

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.

The Reality is

Truth

- 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

Truth

The Reality is

★ Persons with limited or some verbal skills can benefit from AAC.

★ It does not stop them from being verbal.
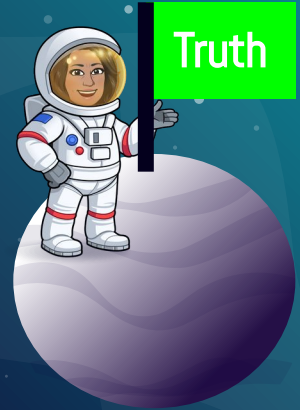
★ How do I document this?

 ★ Case Examples

"
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

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Myth

" 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

Myth

"Communication devices can only be activated with the hands.

Truth

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

Myth

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

Truth

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.

"

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

Truth

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)
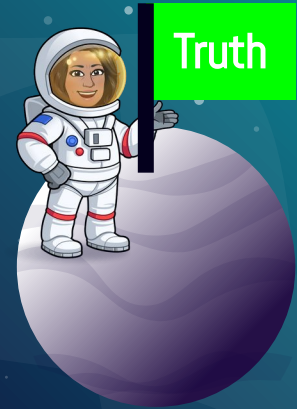 ★ Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
  ★ Muscular Sclerosis (MS)

"

An illiterate adult cannot use an AAC device

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

3.
Myths vs. Realities in AAC Treatment

Experiences and Case Examples

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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.

"

Only the AAC user needs device training

Truth

The Reality is

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

Myth

" Labeling

=

Communication

Truth

The Reality is

★ Labeling is a task for testing.
★ Labeling is **not** one of the <u>communicative functions</u>.

" "

Myth

Communication is stationary

The Reality is

Truth

★ 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.

"

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?
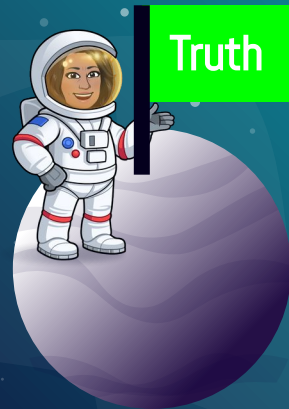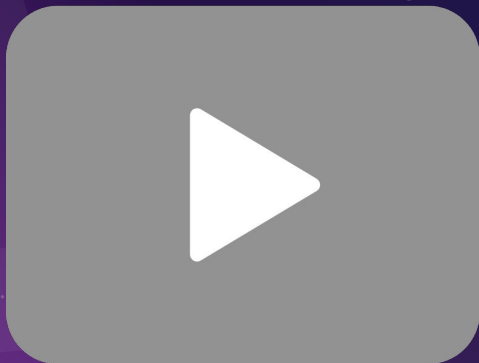
I am Groot...
Who is he?
What's the Comparison to AAC use?

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

Truth

"

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

Truth

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.

What can we do about it?

Truth

- ★ 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/AAC05EarlyIntMythsRealitiesRomskiSevcik.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/site-assets/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
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