

- Hello, everybody

Let me know if you have any trouble hearing me

I don't know if there's anything I can do on my end, but you should have sound

And I will now share my screen

Okay

So hopefully, the tech gods will be smiling on us and this will all work today

And I'm very, very happy to talk with you folks today about this issue

It's an important issue for me

I have a son with autism, he's now 27

But I've lived through the transition process, not personally with AAC, but I have seen some of what can go wrong, some of what can also go right, and how we can manage AAC and transition planning to give people the best possible chance

And it's something that I think, when I worked in the schools, I didn't necessarily think about enough, that, you know, we get everybody ready to go on through the mini transitions within school age, from elementary to middle school or middle school to high school, but the transition to adulthood is, it's precipitous, to say the least

So it's something we really wanna give a lot of direct consideration to

I work for Temple University, and they pay my salary

And the Institute on Disabilities is getting a stipend for this presentation

So that's my disclosure

And who am I? I am a speech and language pathologist

I returned to school after my oldest was diagnosed with autism at the age of four years, 10 months

And you can see the pictures here

Two things that give me a lot of joy

My Schnabel-huahua, a rescue dog from Puerto Rico named Ginny

And also, I live by a small lake in Lower Bucks County

And looking out at the water brings me lots of peace at the end of the day

Now, I think all of you have your microphones automatically disabled

I think the only thing I need to say here is at the end, I'm gonna give you a QR code to a survey for tech LPA, and that's separate from any survey that AbleNet might do

But if any of you can click in and give your feedback to us, that would be awesome

Okay, so as with any good training, we have to have learning objectives

So, you know, what am I gonna be talking about today? So I hope by the end, you will have an idea about three considerations impacting vocabulary selection for adults who use AAC

Three critical elements or more to a successful transition

And we're kinda just gonna generally talk about sort of a template transition plan, some really important elements to planning for success

So as we go through, you'll get elements of that

I see somebody's in the chat

That's the handout for today

Awesome

One little thing about chats, on Zoom it took me almost an entire pandemic to figure out is if you go into write a message in the chat, first make sure it's to host and panelists so everybody can see, but also, there's a little ellipse next to that smiley face

And if you click on that, at the end of today's presentation, you can save the chat and download it to your computer

So just in case you have any questions or things that are answered in the chat, you can save that information

I have enabled automatic captioning today

This is not as perfect as a cart transcriptionist would be, but it will allow you not just to listen, but to read

If anybody needs a transcript or a fully accessible copy of the PowerPoint at the end of today, please do let us know, and I will be happy to provide that

All of my images in the PowerPoint have alternative text

And if I send you a copy in a couple of days, I will make sure that it also includes the correct reading order for the slides

All right, so here's information that I think most of us know like the back of our hands

We know what AAC is

We know that aided AAC is the use of tools, and really any tools, that can support communications

And that AAC in general is anything beyond speech used to convey information

And generally, we sort of subdivide AAC into two categories, the device and the services or supports that are necessary to get that device and to maintain that device

And, of course, the more high-tech you're working with, the more services are gonna be necessary to support that system

I would add another leg to that stool

I would say that when we're thinking about AAC in the modern age, we should think about the device, the services and the data

Because these days, so many people are using iPad-based AAC devices or high-tech apps that allow you to utilize programs, like Realize Language, to record data to look at where it's being used and what words are being said in different contexts

And that is an important issue to think about as we look towards transition

Okay, Jim, I'm getting a message from a few people that their chat seems to be disabled, but the Q&A is a better place for questions anyway

So, okay, but maybe he can work on that

All right, I love this quote by Maya Angelou because we really can't know what we're looking at in terms of the systems, supports, or lack of supports, in the adult world unless we know a little bit about the history and the background of the treatment of people with disabilities in the United States

And I will be focused on the US, though some of the issues I'm gonna talk about really have been global issues, not just impacting the United States

So let's talk a little bit about the incarceration of people with disabilities, because unfortunately in at very least the US and large parts of Europe, eugenics is an issue that we have to face and eugenics has impacted so many different populations in our country's history

It's impacted people of color, it's impacted Native Americans, it has impacted very strongly people with disabilities

So people with disabilities were locked up in large state institutions and parents were advised, you know, they might give birth to a child with Down syndrome or another disability and they'd be told, you know, you should just give this child over to an institution and get on with your lives

Go back to living as if it would be so easy to do that with a human being, right? So in part because of the influence of that eugenics movement throughout the 20th century, so many people were locked up in state institutions

And one of the most famous is Pennhurst, which is in the Philadelphia area

It's just a little outside of the city

So who got locked up? People who did not match societal norms

And at the peak of this process in the '60s and '70s, I mean really think about the number, 180,000 or more people with developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities resided in state institutions

They faced torture, they faced neglect, they faced sexual exploitation, and needless to say, a lack of self-determination and ability to guide and steer their own lives

And it's something we have to keep in mind as we look at where things are today

And just gonna keep my eye on the Q&A

Okay, it looks like the chat is enabled now, so that's good

So let's talk about Pennhurst today, When I drive to Temple University, I go down I95, not one of the most fun parts of my day

And in the fall on I95, there are lots of billboards along the highway that advertise the Pennhurst Asylum as a Halloween attraction, as a spooky house that you go to to get scared, to be titillated, to think about, ooh, you know, Halloween stuff

And that is so far from being okay, it gets me furious every time I see one of those billboards

This was a place where thousands upon thousands of people suffered and a lot of people died

So people have told me, people who were at Pennhurst that they believe there are hundreds of bodies buried on the grounds of the institution

And nobody knows exactly where a lot of those graves are

It's not okay that this has been made into a haunted house

The fact that it's seen as acceptable, I think really reflects on the state of ableism in our society today and how we still continue to devalue people who are at least visibly disabled

And that's something

So a continuing part of our history that we have to deal with

About five years ago, the Institute on Disabilities put on a play, it was called "A Fierce Kind of Love" and it was all about the history of the disability rights movement

The actors themselves were people with disabilities

I didn't have anything to do with producing it, but was so thrilled to get to go see it when it was live in Philadelphia

And I did find the link to this on Vimeo

So if you have the live copy of the slide deck, you can click into that link and see the play

If that doesn't work for you, please let me know and I will be happy to share that link with you again

It's really moving and stunning

And when this play was presented live, they did so with captioning

They had a big screen where you could read what was being said

They had sensory friendly areas, they had all sorts of different options, including a fully accessible building with an elevator that worked for power chairs so that nobody was limited

Everybody could come and see this play on their own terms and be comfortable seeing it

So a lot of what we do today as people in special education or working with adults with disabilities is shaped or molded by the laws of this nation leading out of that disability rights movement

And you could kind of think of it as sort of building in tandem with the civil rights movement, with the civil rights movement, some of that kind of preceding by a few years what happened with disability rights

But because of the people who were part of that movement, we saw the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 leading to changes in work and housing and some more options for transportation

We then saw the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975

My mom was really involved with that because my two little brothers had learning disabilities and she had to fight the school system in New York City a few years later to get them to provide the services that they need to survive and to thrive

She almost took them to court

And after that, 32 years ago, as of just a few days ago, the Americans with Disabilities Act entered into force, was signed by the first President Bush

And that led to really a lot more visibility and rights to exist in public spaces, telecommunication services, rights to employment, rights to assistive technology

And this even flows over into higher education as one of the many contexts that people with disabilities might find themselves in

And then based on that, in 1999, we saw the Olmsted Decision

So it looked at the ADA and was able to bring a case to the Supreme Court that saying that segregation of people with disabilities was a form of unlawful discrimination under the ADA

And that made a huge difference

So it helped to spur the further development of home and community-based services, HCBU, and this is a tool for deinstitutionalization

So what HCBU specifically does is to take the funding from Medicaid that would've served somebody in an institutional setting and allow it to be diverted to pay for somebody to live in the community

And that was added to the Social Security Act in 1983 and became a formal state Medicaid option in 2005

But it's not implemented by every state

Here where I am in Pennsylvania, it is implemented

So we see people with intellectual disabilities and autism and other types of DD receiving supports in the community under the consolidated waiver, or the PFDS waiver, or a variety of different waivers

There's also an autism waiver and it's quite a change from massive incarceration and criminalization of disability

Is it perfect yet? Hmm-mm, no

Far from

The world of adulthood is a world of eligibility for programs

It is not a world of entitlement

And because of that, because we don't receive the same services as adults, we have to be very careful about getting ready for that after school period of life for post 21 or post 18, and really look at what we can do starting very early on to get that transition in place

Gonna take a sip of tea

If you hear a frog in my voice, I was visited by COVID in June and since then I've been having asthma

So don't worry about it

But yes, I've got a nice frog going on

Okay, so looking at goals for 21 plus, we have to consider all the different options or all the different places that a person might find themselves

Does this person wanna work? Will they need support through vocational rehabilitation to successfully hold a job? Do they wanna continue living at home or do they wanna go live in the community as an independent or semi-independent adult? Are they going to pursue higher education? Are they going to pursue vocational training? So the preparation for this, for answering all of these questions, I would say it begins the moment we start considering and evaluating for AAC, even if that child is, let's say five years old in kindergarten

And if you get a chance to take a look at this PowerPoint by Dr

McNaughton on transition in AAC is a really wonderful resource

So this is a question as an SLP working with AAC, I would hear all the time in the schools or also in the adult world, do we take away somebody's voice? And usually in schools we're talking about not letting someone take away somebody's device because they're off topic or they're talking too much and the teacher's trying to teach

But we are equally taking away someone's voice if we don't consider how we transition that device or get a permanent device for that person when they're going to graduate

And with so many Apple-based AAC systems today, we also have to keep in mind that it's not so simple

The family can't just go out and buy an iPad and then transfer an app from the school iPad to the family iPad because those apps do not transfer across Apple IDs

And that school iPad is likely run or monitored by a large iPad system such as Jamf, the one that we use at the Institute on Disabilities

So we really do need to be planning for an AAC evaluation or reevaluation, and an insurance report for many of our students well before their last semester

And if the goal is secondary, post-secondary education, there's also another good reason to do a formal reevaluation because colleges and universities, probably also vocational schools, certainly community colleges often will ask for very recent documentation of disability in order to provide the accommodations that somebody is eligible for under the Rehab Act and under the ADA

So to have that up to date evaluation is really, really good

Will we be getting the PowerPoint with the links? I'm just looking at the chat for a moment and we'll be emailing the PowerPoint as opposed to putting, I don't have it hosted like on a website

to give you a link to go to it, but I'm happy to share my email address and to send you a copy after we are done

And I'm gonna put that into the chat now to make sure you have it

It's on a couple of slides at the end as well

And what does our Q&A say? Saying, what's the name of the app used at the Institute for Disabilities? That is a very good question, Tanisha

In terms of apps for communication, there are a lot of different choices

And you might see software on a dedicated communication device that is really packaged and put together by a vendor of a communication system, such as PRC-Salttillo or Tobii Dynavox, or you might see something that is iPad or tablet based

The choice of the app depends upon the needs of the individual

And one of the major considerations that will go into what kind of app that person uses is that person's access to literacy

Have they learned enough generative reading and writing skills that they can use something called text to speech and type something and have it spoken out loud? Or are they somebody who needs symbol support because their literacy skills are not sufficient to text to speech? Or maybe somebody is gonna use a combination of both

So we match the system to the needs and abilities of the individual as opposed to a one size fits all

And back to the issue of whether we take away somebody's voice when that person is graduating, I highly recommend Erin Sheldon's presentation from AAC in the Cloud

I think it was about three years ago in the before times

She does quite an excellent presentation about the different issues involved in how we, the importance of why we look at transition very carefully

So when I talked about the definition of AAC, I talked about the issue of data, right? Because so often these days we're using a high tech device where somebody's user or vocabulary set, so that's the piece of customized software that's been put together for that individual, it's gonna contain a lot of personalized or customized access to core and specific vocabulary that that person has needed to communicate

And we've gotta make sure that we are backing it up, saving it to a flash drive, saving it on a computer, or using a safe cloud based solution to save it such as Dropbox or Google Cloud

And the decision about what you do in terms of saving data to the cloud if you're in the school age services, is gonna depend upon what system is approved by your school district as being HIPAA and FERPA compliant

So that's another consideration we have to take into account and looking at making sure that we're also making sure that a date is listed on the name of every single backup that we do and that we're consistently backing up that software as soon as we've made any major changes or done some editing to the device

Okay, let me look at the Q&A again

Bruce asks whether formal transition planning process can begin as early as when the student reaches 16

It can begin earlier than that

And in Pennsylvania, we were told that we should have the student attend their IEP meeting by the age of 14

I would say that that should be even earlier

I would say that we should be working very early on to ensure that that student is not only getting a voice, but is learning how to advocate for themselves, participate actively in their IEP meeting, maybe even run part of their IEP meeting

That should be a goal

So beyond just the speech therapist or the AT specialist backing up that voice, that's not gonna help that much if the family or the individual or whoever is going to be that person's close circle of care once they graduate, if they don't know how to use a cloud based backup or how to transfer software from one device to another, then it's not gonna make that much of a difference if the software is still in the SLP's iPad or in the cloud

So part of that should be the transfer of our knowledge

We talk about interprofessional training and we've gotta think about that the team for AAC includes not just the other so-called professionals on the team, but also that family or those caregivers, and making sure that we're sharing that knowledge transfer with the family, with the individual who uses AAC if possible, do they know how to edit their own device and making sure that everyone has that knowledge to sustain those backups and gain access to them after graduation

Now let's talk for a moment about post-secondary environments

I've talked a little bit before about places where AAC users may find themselves

So I know a lot of AAC users who do a very wide variety of things with their lives

Some of them are in competitive employment, some of them live in community living arrangements or what we might call group homes, some who go to community colleges and achieve a degree, a two-year degree, or those who go on to achieve a four-year college education and grad school

One of the people whose work I follow a lot when he presents or when they present is somebody who's got a master's in public health

There's another AAC user I know of who has just finished a doctorate, I believe in neuroscience

So when we talk about that presumption of the ability to learn or what is sometimes called presuming competence, we've got to really believe that people who use AAC are going to go onto a variety of different settings and contexts as they grow up and make sure that they're prepared for that

And we're kind of, I would say if we're not doing a good job at trying to work on literacy skills and ensure that that person has access to as much literacy as possible, then maybe we're not doing a good enough job

And that's not to say everybody's literacy outcomes will be the same, but I sort of, my ongoing nightmare is the idea that, there's a kid who could benefit from AAC, who could access literacy instruction and become a writer and become a thinker and become somebody who maybe does the next great American novel, but they're not given access to the technology and the appropriate instruction early enough

And so by the time they're 16 or 17, we've blunted somebody's potential because we haven't given them the tools and the instruction that they need from an early enough age

So let's look again at that concept of eligibility for adults who need AAC

Let's just state it straight out that sometimes it's pretty darn hard for an adult to find supports and services

You have to be aware of what's available, you have to seek it out, you have to get on waiting lists

So in Pennsylvania, one of the big debates has been whether or not to use funding from the American Rescue Plan and other COVID related plans to fund HCBU, the home and community based services because there are a lot of people, there are thousands of people on wait lists who don't get the services that they need

In one case I dealt with about two years ago, this led to an adult with autism being abandoned at their day program 'cause they didn't have the appropriate waiver funding that was gonna really meet that family unit's needs

Was it that this family didn't care about that person or didn't care what happened? That wasn't the case at all

This person was left because the family felt like they just could not meet their needs with the resources they had

And so they left her one day at day program and they never picked her up

And that was incredibly sad to hear about

So you have to have this awareness, you have to have this knowledge

Even when you search out services, you may not be able to get them for several years depending upon the wait list and your state

And all of this is even harder if you come from an under-resourced community and haven't been made aware of those services from an early stage

So that is a big problem

And we should, as people who work in the schools, be making sure that all our families know what resources are available to them as they near transition and look at connecting them up also with vocational rehabilitation because voc rehab can cover assistive technology and supports for employment, but it can also be involved in covering some of post-secondary education as well

Okay, check the chat again

Yes

Starting early vital

And in the case of my son, he's verbal, he never needed AAC

He did use some assistive technology for organization and for typing

I don't think he was invited to an IEP meeting until he was about 16

And I sat down to start talking about assistive technology and somebody from his high school actually said, "Well, I see your son here is getting mostly As and Bs, so guess we don't need to have this conversation

" They literally said that to me

And because I have the knowledge and the privilege that comes with being a speech language pathologist and having experience in the schools, I was able to shut that down and say, "Yes, we do need to consider this

" But there are a lot of people who don't necessarily have those tools

Okay, where to look for supports

Speech therapists are really hard to find in the adult world

Finding an SLP who knows about augmentative communication and can help you with that is even more difficult

So one of the things I would urge you to do is whatever state you're in or US territory So this also is for American Samoa or Guam or Puerto Rico, look at the AT3Center org website and check out the AT Act Program for your state or territory because they will be able to connect you with a lot of information and assist you in accessing the information and the technology that could benefit you in the adult world

If you're here in Pennsylvania and just happen to be in the same state with me, then you can take a look at techowlpa

org And that is the main website for the Assistive Technology Act in the state of PA

And we also have an AAC website called AACcommunity net

You can also access the Job Accommodation Network and they're gonna be very familiar with what resources are available and what you're eligible for in your particular state

And it's not easy

It is tough

Reimbursement rates can be very low

And there have been times when I've gone to a home to do an evaluation for a 28 year old with a very complex body, very complex seating needs, a lot of spasticity, not a lot of voluntary control of her muscles, and they tell me, "Oh yeah, she gets speech therapy

" And I say, "What are they working on?" And the caregivers say, "Oh, well, they're working on the BMP and mmh sounds

" That to me is a real disservice if we're trying to take somebody with a lot of spasticity who's already in their adult body and mind and expect them to improve their communication through working on BP and M, we are not perhaps the best person to be working on that caseload and should be looking at those resources, like the Assistive Technology Act Center, for how we can better connect that person to somebody who can help them

And as we get closer and closer to adulthood, we also have to think about vocabulary

How many of you, if you work in schools or in school districts, have a district that allows you to put vocabulary for all the body parts or for sexuality or for intimate relationships on that child's AAC device? How many of them have access to being able to curse, to being able to like get frustrated by something and say, "Damn it all to hell"? I'm guessing that the answer is almost 100% no

And that's a problem because there's not a ton of research

But my colleague Haley has done a lot of looking into vocabulary and there seemed to be some developmental norms for when certain types of words for body parts and for curses occur in a child's vocabulary

And shouldn't we be following developmental norms and guidelines for exposing people to the vocabulary they need? And what happens if our seven year old AAC user says, "Damn it" in class? What would we do if that child were a speaking child? And they said "Damn it" in class because they got frustrated

There are opportunities to make mistakes and to get the consequences for those mistakes and to learn when you use that vocabulary and when you don't

So just because somebody has that kind of communication disability doesn't mean they don't need access to all these words

And I highly recommend the blog by Donnie Denome

They've written a lot about how to symbolize intimacy
And Donnie Denome and Cooper, they've presented wonderful presentations at AAC in the
Cloud about autonomy and the dignity of risk as adult AAC users
So check them out, it's worth it
You won't regret it
Okay, why do we need to be able to talk about our bodies and forbidden topics? If we teach
body parts in a matter-of-fact way, it doesn't need to be sexualized, it can just be age
appropriate
And we are literally empowering that person to direct their own care, talk about their own
physical needs, and empower that person to say no when they need to say no
And when they say no, we need to listen
So here's a wonderful video, I'm gonna see if it's gonna play for us
I think we've got enough time for this and I just want you to hear to the ebb and flow of this
very age appropriate conversation
I hope it works
And it doesn't talk at the very beginning
So your sound is fine

- [Computer Voice] What's your favorite food? Popsicle
Four
Pretzels

- [Mom] Ethan, you're out of time
Okay

- Mama
Mama, mama, mama, mama, mama, mama

- [Computer Voice] Diarrhea

- [Mom] Hey Dan, no, we're not gonna talk about bathroom talk at dinner

- [Computer Voice] Diarrhea

- [Mom] Hey Dan, oh my goodness
Come on
All right, let's give Ethan back its

- [Computer Voice] Pee pee

- [Mom] Hey, Ethan

- [Computer Voice] Pee pee

- [Mom] No, we're not gonna talk about bathroom talk at the dinner table
No, no, no
Do you have anything else you'd like to talk about? Because it's not bathroom talk time

- Okay, I love that video so much
It's obviously a little older now because the child is using something like a springboard light
But look at how normal that conversation was
What three or four year old doesn't wanna do poop talk at the dining room table? It's awesome
And it's just so completely wonderfully normal
And mom doesn't take the device away, she just talks about what's appropriate
And those kids are having such a good time in that video
Okay
Oh, and my tech continues to work and I was able to forward the slide
Okay, another reason why we really need all the words
People who can't speak and don't have the vocabulary to talk about all their body parts can't report as effectively or at all about abuse
And people with ID are seven times more likely to be abused than the general population
And that reporting from 2018 by Joe Shapiro doesn't necessarily include those who are non-speaking and not able to talk or don't have AAC
And what happens if somebody who's non-speaking suffers abuse? Somebody finds out about it
A legal case is even brought to the justice system
If you try to introduce an AAC system to that person as they're about to go to court, well that defense lawyer is gonna say that you're leading the witness, that you put the words in their mouth, that these aren't their words and they're gonna shoot it down
And that person, that case might be dismissed or that person found innocent
So not having access to communication is hugely, hugely important that we get AAC and all the words into people's hands
And if you want to read about an example of this, I highly recommend the book "Ghost Boy" by Martin Pistorius

And he talks about the period of time when he was totally non-speaking and the abuse that he did undergo at that point

'Cause people think that people who are non-speaking are the safest, easiest victims to exploit
Now let's talk about those adult roles, rights and responsibilities

I'm gonna sort of hurry along a bit so that we get through with this with time for questions

And let's talk a little bit about that privacy and data tracking or data tracking

So have you been using Realize Language or another system? They're great systems that allow you to sort of figure out, okay, what is said where, in what contexts? And there can be absolutely appropriate times to use data tracking for AAC, but we should be absolutely working to maximize the independence and the autonomy of that individual so that that data tracking doesn't necessarily continue into the teenage years or as they build their own sort of concept of self

And Isaac did a really good webinar on this a couple of years ago and there's another one of those AAC in the Cloud presentations

Take a look at those

These are really important issues

And vocabulary for higher education and work too

How much of that is available on the person's device? What do we need to be able to say to go to college or to get a job? And is core vocabulary sufficient or is there going to be specific vocabulary for that person's aspirations that we're gonna need to make sure that they have added to their device and time to practice with before they graduate? And those literacy skills, if we can get somebody literate and they can start writing, then they really truly have access to all the words

Getting accommodations for employment and keeping work varies from state to state

The ADA of course only requires that employers provide those good old reasonable accommodations

But I do know of examples or cases where a vocational rehabilitation organization has funded an AAC evaluation and then has helped to fund that device

So assistive technology is part of what voc rehab does

Higher education, again, let's take a look at that ADA

And what that ADA allows and authorizes or requires in higher education setting

It still makes the student responsible for requesting their accommodations and it's still somewhat limited in terms of it provides for the technologies that are needed to access the curriculum

So it might provide for the use of some software like Read & Write Gold or to make sure that somebody has a note taker in the classroom and they have access to the notes, but it doesn't provide for specialized equipment and it doesn't necessarily provide for the accommodations that individual might need to be able to access all of the coursework and get into all of the files on Canvas that they need to access

So let's think more about universal design for learning as it applies not just to kids in school but also to universities

And let's look beyond, if you wanna take a look at Sara Pyszka's excellent book, "Inside My Outside," it'll tell you a bit about what Wright State University does, which does go above and

beyond the ADA to make sure that people with complex bodies and complex communication needs can participate and get their, also get their physical needs met while they're on campus
How about COVID-19? What has the pandemic taught us or told us about AAC and access to higher education or to work? COVID-19 has really changed the way a lot of us access our jobs and our learning

Obviously I'm not sitting in an office cubicle right now, I am in the four season room in my house where I think it's about 92 degrees at the moment

So remote learning and remote work, we've gotta think about how that may benefit some of our people who use AAC, about how when we're in the remote context, if we're typing into a Teams meeting or we're using emails, we're all using some form of augmentative communication, and it behooves us also if we have access to a learning management system to look at how we can make sure it's set up so that everything is as UDLED as possible so that when somebody goes to a course, maybe they have access to the video recording of that asynchronous lesson after the fact

And maybe they also have access to an accessible slide deck and to a transcript of what was talked about

So we can intentionally use the term tools that we have to make things better for people with all types of abilities

And when we make things more accessible, we are going so far beyond benefiting the person with complex communication needs

We're benefiting all the students and we're benefiting a lot of students who may have invisible and undiagnosed disabilities

And we also have to look at the pros and cons

So if we're in the remote context, do we lose access to that face to face communication to some of those relationships and that social capital that we can gain from being on a campus and face to face with people

So there are a lot of things to consider and I think that the COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with a sort of a very natural study period that's gonna help us learn more about how we can make higher education accessible to all

And that's what I wanna look at as I go forward with my research

So, whew

Okay, what time is it? It's 3:47

This is my email address again, so please do feel free to contact me after the fact and I will make sure to get Mr

Rocco a fully accessible copy of the PowerPoint

And I really, I welcome you if you email me tonight or if you email me in five months, I'm happy to talk to people about these issues

And I also wanna tell you folks about a new tool that's on the AACcommunity net website

My colleagues just put together this amazing series of trainings

It's called AAC Essentials and they are learning strands based on your role, so there's a learning strand for people who might be supporters or therapists or caregivers

There's a learning strand for AAC users, there's a strand for administration and leadership

These are totally free

If you go through and take one of these strands and take the quiz at the end, you can get a free certificate of completion that you might be able to use for your CEOs

So please check this out, use it if it works for you

You can also take the lessons on an a la carte basis and share it 'cause we'd love it to see it be used and give us feedback so that we know what you'd like to see added or what you need to see expanded within the training

And here's that QR code for the Tech Owl survey

We'd love to get your feedback

You can also type the Bitly link into your browser and we always welcome feedback to see what we're doing well and what we can do better

So I'd be happy to receive that from you

I'm gonna keep that up for a moment and look at the chat

So yeah, go for it

Christina, if you're interested in AAC Essentials, doesn't matter what state you're in or what country you're in, go ahead and use that

It's for everyone

And Cheryl asks if I'd be willing to do this again for a group of OTPT and speech therapy people, I'd be absolutely happy to present this information again

But it's also gonna be hosted on the AbleNet website

So I know that Jim mentioned something about that being on AbleNet, so you'll have access to this information, but you can also contact me if you have a particular training need, that's fine too

And so now if anybody else has any questions, I'm happy to stay on and answer them

We've got about 10 minutes

Thank you everybody for attending today and this was awesome fun sitting here in my four season room and I didn't get interrupted by either my cats or my dog

So that was a real plus

And yeah, please feel free to ask any more questions if you have them

Thank you for attending

Thank you

Thank you very much everybody

I'm gonna stop my slide deck and if you don't have any more questions, I'm aware of how valuable your time is, so feel free to log off and go on with your day

Thank you everyone for being here

- [Jim] All right, thank you, Kathryn, for such a great presentation and especially for touching on those topics that you know, some people do tend to shy away from

I think it's really important that we do address those issues

For those of you who are still with us, you should receive an email tomorrow, right around 24 hours after the start of this webinar to access that certificate of attendance

Thank you for attending and have a great day

- So Jennifer is asking, she missed because of something urgent and will the webinar be posted? And my understanding is that it will be on your website, right?

- [Jim] Yeah

So on our website and I'll post a link to the YouTube channel in the chat right now
But on the AbleNet website you can find a link to that YouTube channel
About 48 hours is typically what we tell everyone that the webinar will be available
Usually I get it up the same day though, so probably later tonight it will be available

- All right

Hey, any more questions? I'm happy to answer them or talk about my dog, Jenny

Okay

Let's see here

So Jennifer is an SLP who works with adults and transition age individuals

And for anybody who'd like to connect, I'll type my email into the chat here again and for anybody who has specific questions about like the issue of the cursing and the unacceptable language and all of that stuff, shoot me an email and I'll connect you also with my colleague Hailey Strickler who did an amazing presentation on that issue at ATIA this year

And I think that was recorded and might be available on the ATIA website

So I put my email address in the chat and let me also type it into, I can do it to everyone

I'm not sure if this is private, but let me put it into the question A and the answer section too
Oops, if I can actually type at this point

Now Christine says thank you for including the information about students with complex physical and medical needs

So important

And we've gotta look at sort of child language development and child language norms

What if we're not giving people access to that information to talk about their own physical being and what they're feeling and how it feels and what they like and what they don't like?
There's a concept which I've been learning about interoception, which means sort of monitoring inside your own body what you're feeling and what feels good and what doesn't feel good

And the ability to do that can be impaired in some people

And if we don't, if people have impaired interoception and they also don't have access to the words they need to talk about that stuff

Yeah, not good

Okay, so Lisa would like me to put the QR code back up

Let me share that screen again

So there it is

Hopefully that QR code works for you

I should test it out on my own camera

So for those of you who are not used to QR codes, you should be able to hold the camera of your smartphone up to the screen and it should bring you up with the link to the survey or type the Bitly into your browser

Okay, awesome

Thanks, Jim

Yeah, Christine, you're absolutely right to having that conversation about the vocabulary with parents can be very difficult

I sat in one IEP meeting where the parents were absolutely outraged that they claimed that the social worker had mentioned the word I think it was masturbation in their health class for the students in the self-contained classroom

And she actually hadn't, she had used a curriculum that just said, hey, if anything is under your bathing suit, nobody should touch there without your permission

Which in and of itself of course is good, but doesn't provide the vocabulary we need to talk about abuse or to talk about sexuality

And that the parent though was very, very upset

And there is gonna be that conflict, it's gonna be difficult to navigate that

And there are more and more vocabulary sets though for AAC that are making it possible for you to have access to all the words

So for instance, in TD Snap, what used to be Snap Plus Core First, they do have vocabulary sets there for sexuality and intimacy and for reporting on abuse

AssistiveWare has done some more work on this issue as well

But not everything is necessarily open

It may be something you have to search out and really start the discussion young with your family and your team about including that kind of stuff in the child's education

And Jerry's talking about how the requests for speech generating devices have gone up astronomically since COVID and his district or their district, and yeah, I think we've sort of got a confluence of things happening where the iPad is now more than 10 years old

Lots of tech companies that look at accessibility and that look at just general apps for people have been made aware by the disability rights community about how their devices can be used for good to allow people access to AAC or access information and then we have the pandemic and more and more people have to be able to access stuff remotely

And yeah, AbleNet, I've done several device requests through AbleNet and my understanding was that I believe AbleNet sort of foresaw the supply chain problems that were going to happen and ordered themselves a bunch of iPads at the very beginning of the pandemic and were then able to meet a lot of people's needs and other device manufacturers as well

I'm sure they've seen their numbers go up in the time since the pandemic began

And a lot of SLPs have had to learn a lot about how to do information remotely, how to do therapies remotely, how to put up green screens and backdrops

One SLP who does a wonderful YouTube channel and has a lot of information on that particular topic is Sarah Gregory

She has also presented at ATIA

And Christine says that she sees another benefit from COVID, that it allowed more conversation and cooperative use about AAC at home with those virtual lessons

And I've seen that as well in my work with the adult world and also with birth to three, people who work in education or in other formats have had to learn how to do this work without necessarily being the person there on the spot to fix everything

And I think that's forced some of us to sort of pull back and say, hey, it's not so good for us just to be that sage on the stage and say, here we are the expert, we know how to do this
We've all had to learn better how to coach and better how to convey to parents and caregivers that they can do this

They can support their child or their adult, they can edit, they can learn the skills that they need to be able to support a device and to support communication

Somebody else, Doreen says she went to observe a graduate student at a skilled nursing facility
The 49 year old client had TBI and the SLP was using an ABC board for the person to communicate

And she asked why they didn't get him an AAC device

And the SLP said, well, he made inappropriate comments to the women here

Get him a device! If he's disinhibited because of the TBI, that's something that can be dealt with in therapy

But just because somebody says something that might be sexual or inappropriate is not a reason to deny them access to communication

And I would urge everybody who hasn't been on the ASHA website and looked at the National Joint Committee for Communication for people with complex disabilities to look at the communication bill of rights and really use that to guide your work and to guide you in situations like that where somebody absolutely needs access to a voice

Okay

Let's see if I've missed anything

I don't think so, but feel free to reach out and email

Thank you everyone so much for sticking around

Thanks for all the questions and this has been wonderful

It's been great

- [Jim] All right, thank you very much, Kathryn
And with that we will end today's session

- Great

Take care of you, buddy

- Bye

- Bye