

# SARTAC Advisory Committee



Alternative and Augmentative  
Communication (AAC)  
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# Presenters



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# What is SARTAC?

- ❑ Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center
- ❑ Online clearinghouse for information
- ❑ A partnership between regional technical assistance centers
- ❑ Funded by Administration for Community Living



# Purpose: Learning objectives

At the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- × Say what AAC is and what different kinds of AAC there are
- × Say why people might use AAC
- × Say what barriers/problems AAC users face in everyday conversations
- × Say what you can do to make your conversations and meetings more accessible to AAC users

# What is AAC?

- Augmentative and alternative communication
  - ↳ Augmentative: adding to, amplifying (augment)
  - ↳ Alternative: replacing
- Any method of communication that someone uses when they cannot speak with their mouth

# Why do people use it?

- Can't speak all the time
- Some disabilities that can affect speech
  - ↳ Autism
  - ↳ Traumatic brain injuries
  - ↳ ALS
  - ↳ Cerebral palsy
  - ↳ Anxiety/situational mutism
  - ↳ Childhood apraxia of speech

# Different ways people use AAC?

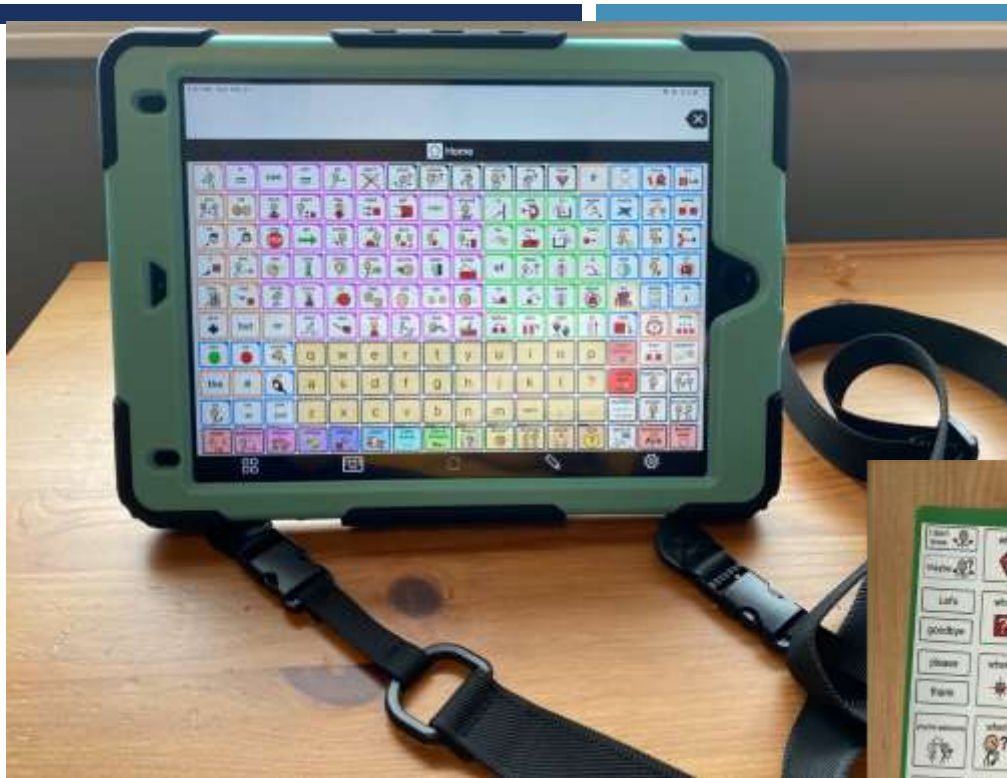
## High Tech

- × AAC apps on everyday devices (phones, tablets, computers)
- × Typing/texting/messaging
- × Dedicated devices

## Light/No Tech

- × Picture cards/boards/books
- × Writing on paper/whiteboard
- × Pointing/gesturing







# Barriers or problems AAC users face in everyday communication

- × Not enough time to type/write/communicate our message
- × People don't think we're capable of communicating/having anything to say
- × People try to guess what we're saying, if we don't want them to

# Barriers or problems AAC users face in everyday communication

- × People speak over/for us
- × People say we're not the ones composing our message
- × People take away our communication supports/AAC devices
  - + People only give us very limited things to talk about

# Communication needs of a AAC user in a conversation

- × Time: it takes us more time to write out what we need to say
- × Understanding: we need people to understand how we communicate and accept it

# Communication needs of a AAC user in a conversation

- × Presumption of competence: people should assume that we are capable of communicating and that we mean what we say
- × Clarification: ask us if you need help communicating with us, and let us ask you if we need help communicating with you.

# How to make meetings and advocacy groups more accessible to AAC users

- × Ask us what works best for us
- × Talk directly to us, and talk to us like everyone else, unless we tell you otherwise

adapted from “Inclusion of AAC Users: Best Practices” guide by Pacific Alliance on Disability Self-Advocacy/Autistic Self Advocacy Network

# How to make meetings and advocacy groups more accessible to AAC users

- × Give us extra time to compose our message
  - + For example, let us go last when answering a question to a group
- × Send us information about the meeting in advance

adapted from “Inclusion of AAC Users: Best Practices” guide by Pacific Alliance on Disability Self-Advocacy/Autistic Self Advocacy Network

# Disability Etiquette

- × Autonomy and respect of AAC users: our devices/communication methods belong to us and aren't just for anyone to touch
  - + An AAC device is like a wheelchair or a service dog; it is an extension of someone's body and space
- × What can an individual can do if they see an AAC user being spoken over



# Small group session questions:

- 1) What are some things you use in your everyday life that could be used as AAC?
- 2) What will you do in your advocacy group or meetings to make them more accessible to AAC users?

# Resources

- × Resources for self advocacy groups can be found at [www.selfadvocacyinfo.org](http://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org)
- × PADSAs guide: [Inclusion of AAC Users: Best Practices](#)
- × AssistiveWare: [Learn AAC](#)
- × endever\* corbin: [Wearable and highly portable AAC ideas](#)
- × [Ask Me, I'm an AAC user!](#) Facebook group