

AAC Knowledge and Team Barriers Self-Rating

Each team member should complete the self-rating sheet to assess their current level of comfort/needs. Follow up with a team meeting to determine if other team members can assist with training/coaching or if more training is needed.

Start by rating your current level of comfort/needs for each area as:

1

**Not Yet/
Need Training On**

2

**Developing/
Need Support**

3

**Established/
Can Support Others**

Then for each area, determine the level of priority to address it.

High

**Must address promptly in
order to move forward**

Medium

**Should address as soon as
possible**

Low

**Should address after high
and medium priorities**

Team Communication & Collaboration				
Knowledge/Task	Rating			Priority H/M/L
Knowledge of preferred method for communication	1	2	3	
Knowledge of roles on the AAC team	1	2	3	
Have meetings scheduled to discuss/address short-term goals	1	2	3	
Have meetings scheduled to discuss/address long-term goals	1	2	3	

General AAC Systems				
Knowledge/Task	Rating			Priority H/M/L
Knowledge of multiple AAC systems	1	2	3	
Knowledge of multiple language systems	1	2	3	
Knowledge of selection methods	1	2	3	
Knowledge of lite-tech AAC	1	2	3	

Specific to this AAC System				
Knowledge/Task	Rating			Priority H/M/L
Knowledge of this AAC system _____	1	2	3	
Knowledge of powering on/off system	1	2	3	
Knowledge of volume control	1	2	3	
Knowledge of charging the system	1	2	3	
Knowledge of system accessories	1	2	3	
Knowledge of system maintenance & support	1	2	3	

Personalizing the AAC System			
Knowledge/Task	Rating		
	1	2	3
How to select and personalize a voice	1	2	3
How to add vocabulary	1	2	3
How to edit a button	1	2	3
How to modify system for ease of access	1	2	3
How to connect to other systems	1	2	3
How to enable /disable system locks	1	2	3

Communication & Language			
Knowledge/Task	Rating		
	1	2	3
Knowledge of reasons to communicate	1	2	3
Knowledge of modes of communication	1	2	3
Knowledge of typical language development	1	2	3
Knowledge of parts of language (e.g phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, & pragmatics)	1	2	3

Implementation			
Knowledge/Task	Rating		
	1	2	3
Knowledge of ways to engage your learner	1	2	3
Knowledge of communication partner strategies	1	2	3
Knowledge of prompt hierarchy	1	2	3
Have a plan for implementing across settings	1	2	3
Have a plan for incorporating AAC use in the community	1	2	3

AAC Goals			
Knowledge/Task	Rating		
	1	2	3
Have goals for linguistic competence	1	2	3
Have goals for operational competence	1	2	3
Have goals for social competence	1	2	3
Have goals for strategic competence	1	2	3
Have a plan for progress monitoring & reporting	1	2	3

Resources			
Knowledge/Task	Rating		
	1	2	3
For getting started with the system	1	2	3
For getting started with implementation	1	2	3
For growing language	1	2	3
For increasing literacy skills	1	2	3

AAC Knowledge and Team Barriers Self-Rating Instructions

It can be helpful for communication partners to rate their knowledge and skills around common AAC barriers. Determining where training and support needs are at early in AAC intervention can help your team collaborate more effectively throughout the year.

Here are some things to consider for each of the areas on the AAC Knowledge and Team Barriers Self-Rating Sheet. Rate yourself as:

- 1= I am not comfortable with this, I don't know about this, I am going to need training on this.
- 2= I am somewhat comfortable with this, I know a little about this, I might need some support with this.
- 3= I am comfortable with this, I know a lot about this, I could help support others on the team with this.

Team Communication & Collaboration

Knowledge of preferred method for communication:

Communication among AAC team members is important. There needs to be frequent and regular contact between all team members to help the AAC learner achieve their goals. This includes informal and formal types of communication, (email, communication log, texting, phone calls, video chats, in-person meetings) that should occur on an ongoing basis.

Knowledge of roles on the AAC team:

There are many roles on an AAC team. Identifying and assigning jobs to team members early on can help to make AAC implementation go more smoothly. Jobs include device cleaning, charging, backing up of custom vocabulary file, adding needed vocabulary, scheduling meetings, scheduling trainings, and review progress, just to name a few.

Having meetings scheduled to discuss/address short-term goals

Meeting to discuss how things are going and adjusting your AAC intervention on a regular basis can help team members work together more effectively. Identifying and addressing questions or concerns in a timely manner can help keep things on track throughout the year.

Having meetings scheduled to discuss/address long-term goals

Meeting to discuss more formally during the year will help the team look at progress towards bigger goals, like transitioning to new programs, language goals, device replacement, etc.

General AAC Systems

Knowledge of multiple AAC systems

Comfort and understanding of multiple AAC systems can help you when implementing AAC in general. Have you worked with two or more types of AAC devices?

Knowledge of multiple language systems

There are many different language systems available on AAC devices and apps. Have you worked with two or more language systems?

Knowledge of selection methods

AAC can be accessed in a variety of ways. Have you worked with direct selection/touch, key guards, touchguides, switch scanning, head tracking, and/or eye tracking?

Knowledge of lite-tech AAC

An AAC device may be the best solution in some environments (outside in the snow or rain) or during some activities (bath time, sledding). You may not have access to your AAC device if it is not fully charged or if it needs to go in for repairs. Having a lite-tech AAC system could be used in these instances. Lite-tech can also be used for visual supports when implementing AAC.

AAC Knowledge and Team Barriers Self-Rating Instructions

Specific to this AAC System

Knowledge of this AAC system _____

Have you worked with or used this particular AAC system and language system before? Knowledge of how the system works, where to find things, what features are available, and how to implement it is needed for successful AAC interventions.

Knowledge of powering on/off system

Do you know where the power button is on the system? Do you know the proper way to put the system to sleep/wake it up? Do you know the proper way to power completely down?

Knowledge of volume control

Do you know where the volume buttons are? Do you know if there are other ways to control the volume on the AAC system or within the vocabulary file?

Knowledge of charging the system

Do you know where the charging port is on the AAC system? Do you know what type of charge cord is needed to charge the system? Do you have a spot for charging it and a schedule for when to charge it?

Knowledge of system accessories

Do you know if there are accessories needed to use this AAC system? Does it have a keyguard, touchguide, switch, mouse, USB drive? Does it have a wheelchair or table mount or floor stand?

Knowledge of system maintenance and support

Do you know who to contact for technical support for this AAC system?

Personalizing the AAC System

How to select and personalize a voice

Do you know how to choose an appropriate voice for your AAC learner? Do you know how to adjust rate of speaking? Do you know how to adjust the pitch to make a voice sound higher or lower?

How to add vocabulary

Do you know how words are organized you the language system? Do you know how to find words in the language system? Do you know the strategies for adding vocabulary to the language system?

How to edit a button

Do you know how to edit a button to add in needed words? Do you know how to find images to use on a button?

How to modify system for ease of access

If needed for your AAC learner, do you know how to use button timing? Do you know how to use visual effects, like button outlines, highlighting the button, or button magnification? Do you know how to use auditory effects auditory prompting or auditory phishing?

How to connect to other systems

If needed for you AAC learner, do you know how to connect the AAC system to a computer

How to enable/disable system locks

There are many reasons why you may want to have an AAC system's Menu or Toolbox locked. Avoiding accidental editing, making sure settings don't get changed, keeping the AAC learner in the correct vocabulary file, just to name a few. Do you know how to set up and enable a system lock on this AAC system? Do you know how to disable the lock?

AAC Knowledge and Team Barriers Self-Rating Instructions

Communication & Language

Knowledge of reasons to communicate

We communicate for a variety of reasons, not just to request things. Some examples would be we can direct actions, make comments, describe things, places, events, state an opinion, ask for information, reject things.

Knowledge of modes of communication

We communicate in a variety of ways, including facial expressions, gestures, sign language, vocalizations, pointing to pictures, mouth speaking, or device speaking.

Knowledge of typical language development

Language skills develop similarly for individuals who use verbal speech and for individuals who use a device to speak. Do you know where to start with the AAC system based on your learner's language needs? Do you know what skills will develop next?

Knowledge of parts of language (e.g., phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics)

There are five parts of language that we can target when developing communication and language skills.

- Phonology is the sound system of a language and the rules that govern the sound combinations.
- Morphology is the system that governs the structure of words and the construction of word forms.
- Semantics is the system that governs the meanings of words and sentences.
- Syntax is the system governing the order and combination of words to form sentences, and the relationships among the elements within a sentence.
- Pragmatics is the system that combines the above language components in functional and socially appropriate communication.

Implementation

Knowledge of ways to engage your learner

Finding fun and engaging activities to communicate in will help you implement AAC with your learner. What are things that they enjoy? What makes them smile? What kind of body language tells you that they are excited to be doing this activity? Use those kinds of activities to model and communicate using the AAC system.

Knowledge of communication partner strategies

Communication partners are key in effective AAC implementation. Modeling, waiting, expanding on messages, and responding to all communication attempts are some of the many strategies that communication partners can use.

Knowledge of prompt hierarchy

Prompts are ways that communication partners help their AAC learner learn to use their AAC system. The goal is for independent communication and communication should be fun. Prompts may include pausing/wait time, non-verbal prompt, environmental cue, asking open-ended questions, visual prompt, partial physical prompt, or a physical prompt.

Have a plan for implementing across settings

Communication should happen across the day for your AAC learner. Look at where they are during the day: home, school, outside therapies, church, sports/activities/clubs, or just out in the community. How will they use AAC in each of those settings?

Have a plan for incorporating AAC use in the community

Where does your AAC learner go within your community? How will the AAC system be used while in the community? How can you provide support to community members so they can help interact with your AAC learner?

AAC Goals

Have goals for linguistic competence

Linguistic competence is the expressive and receptive language development and knowledge of the language system. Examples include improving language use, expanding utterances, using appropriate grammar, syntax, etc.

AAC Knowledge and Team Barriers Self-Rating Instructions

Have goals for operational competence

Operational competence is the skills required to use the AAC system. Examples include powering the device on or off, navigating to other pages, knowing when to turn the volume up or down.

Have goals for social competence

Social competence is the skills involved in social communication. Examples include initiating, maintaining, and terminating communication interactions.

Have goals for strategic competence

Strategic competence is the special skills that are unique to AAC-based communication. Examples include the ability to gain a listener's attention before starting to communicate, checking for the communication partner's understanding, and repairing communication when they are not understood.

Have a plan for progress monitoring & reporting

Monitoring progress is essential for continued improvement for both the AAC learner and the communication partners. How will the team track progress? How often will progress be reported to the team?

Resources

For getting started with the system

Do you know who to contact or where to find information about getting your AAC system setup? Do you know where to find tutorials, support articles, or trainings to learn more about your AAC system and/or the language system you are using?

For getting started with implementation

Do you know who to contact or where to find information and training about AAC implementation?

For growing language

Do you know who to contact or where to find information about growing language with an AAC system?