

AAC for Verbal Individuals

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Hello world, this is me.

I wish, I wish, so hopefully that you will see.

I wish, I wish so hopefully that you will just understand me.

I sit, and I wait, thinking to myself, how long will it be?

I sit, and I wait, and wait some more, thinking to myself how much longer before they see, the true and real me!



If I am so Verbal How Come Some Things Are so Difficult to Communicate?

- Why was writing and typing easier?
- For years I didn't know the answer to this question. I wondered why I could write and type certain things, yet not seem to be able to say them in real time.
- This was frustrating.
- Recognizing these communication challenges and embracing my gift for writing and typing has been so helpful for me!

Before I started Typing

- I had written notes as a form of communication before but once had a teacher tell me to "just tell her."
- My iPad was a huge key in helping pick up the pieces and move past PTSD, it helped me communicate what happened and helped me find my words and trust again.

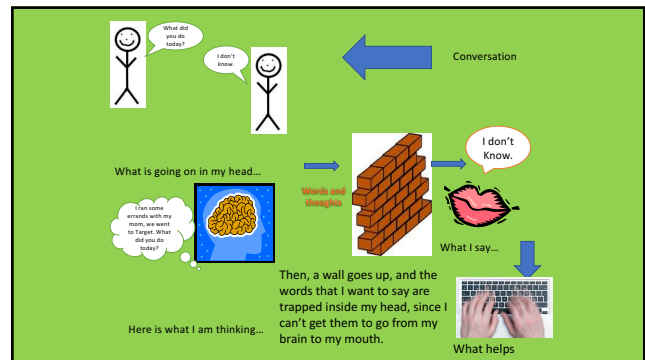
Communication

- There is more to communication than being able to speak
- I tend to struggle with communication even though I am very verbal
- Writing and typing my thoughts has proven to be the easiest way for me to communicate, even more so when it comes to certain topics and times



Communication: The Struggle

- I've been told that the fact I'm so articulate can mask some of these communication challenges.
- Trouble getting the thoughts into words and getting those words from my brain to my mouth
- Answering "I don't know." to questions even when I know the answer.
- Worrying about what others will think (judgement)



How Typing Has Helped

- Introducing myself to a new person
- Communicating I am overwhelmed or want a break
- Making choices
- Typing to doctors
- Communicating during meetings
- Typing out how I am feeling
- Using when frustrated or in a meltdown

The Very Beginning of my AAC Journey

- I started with My Voice AAC which is now GO Talk Rocket.
- I remember when I typed something truly profound. I was so proud.
- I remember when using the device/it's effectiveness really clicked, when screaming at something I didn't like didn't get it to stop, but how it was stopped when I pressed Please Stop on my device.
- Sometimes it was hard to push the button.
- I worried a lot about judgement by others in relation to a variety of things.
- I started advocating by speaking to medical students with the support of my social worker and my AAC device, touching button by button to present in August/September 2011.

Enter AAC!

- Helps supplement or add to verbal communication
- Helps me communicate abstract thoughts that may be too abstract for me to communicate fully verbally
- Gives a way for me to ensure that I am always understood.

A Whole New World was Found

- I was typing and writing things that I hadn't said.
- It opened up a way for me to communicate my wants, needs, likes, dislikes, hopes, wishes, dreams, goals, and feelings in an easier way and ensures that I can do this even when it is hard to find words.
- Having a new tool!

Some Obstacles or Road Bumps

- People saying “just tell me.”
- Self conscious and nervous about being judged and what others would think because I’m so verbal.
- Others not understanding
- Typing for some people and at some places and not others. (I am not a robot!)

Challenges While Using AAC

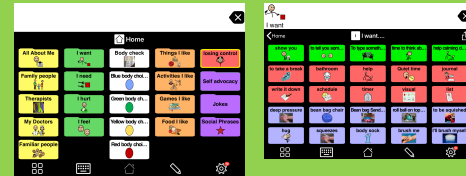
- Difficulty with executive functioning skills getting in the way of an effectively programmed talker that met my needs.
- Getting people to understand. (Explain the doctor who didn't allow Ipad).

The Use of Proloquo2Go

- For me, AAC such as Proloquo2Go serves as a tool that helps me process what I want to say before I say it
- Proloquo2Go allows me to get my thoughts into words and process the language better.
- It serves as a tool for preparing me for communicating in real time.
- It helps me gather my thoughts.
- It helps me start conversations.
- Follow me as I show you some ways how I use Proloquo2Go.

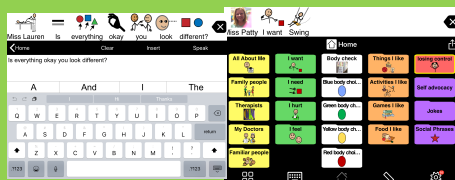


My Device Currently Looks Like:



Proloquo2Go by AssistiveWare

Recent Communication Experiences

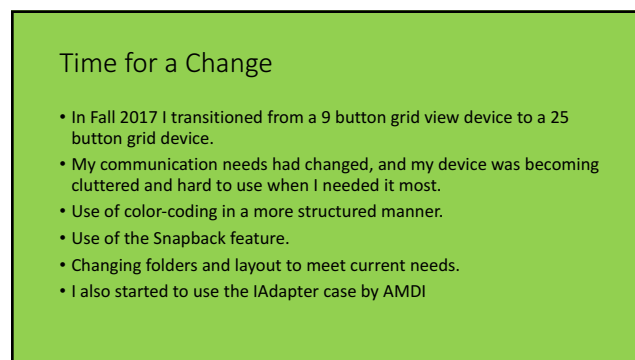
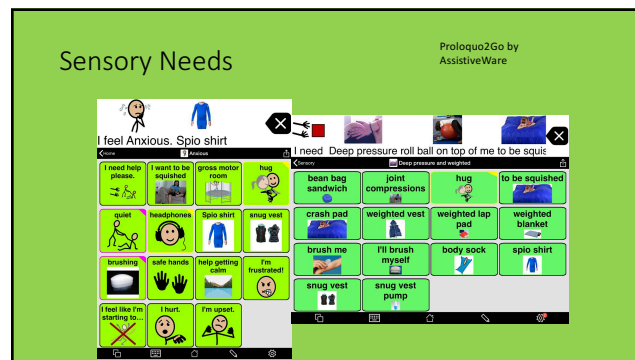
Proloquo2Go by
AssistiveWare

Feelings Pages



Zones of Regulation by Leah M. Kuypers

Proloquo2Go by AssistiveWare

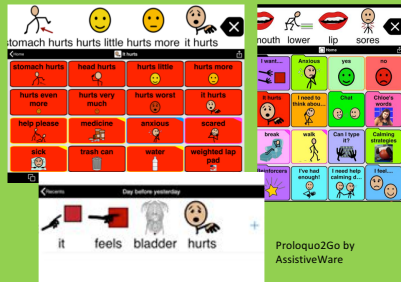


Behavior is Communication!

- Sometimes when my other methods to communicate with others fail, or others ignore me and my attempt to communicate with them, I start to engage in inappropriate behaviors in an effort to communicate and get my point across.
- Also, behaviors can also be used as a way that I defend myself in conflict situations, when I am not always able to defend myself using my words.
- Sometimes screaming is simply my way of communicating something with you, although I know this can be less effective and not appropriate.



Hurt and Pain



Communicating Pain

- Pain is hard for me to communicate.
- It's very abstract.
- I struggle with Interoception (knowing how my body is feeling).
- For a long time, my words and phrases to communicate pain were limited to things like "Hurt", "Mom look at it.", "Fix it", "Throat hurt", "Stomach hurt", "Head hurt" etc.

Interoception by Kelly Mahler

How AAC can Help with Pain

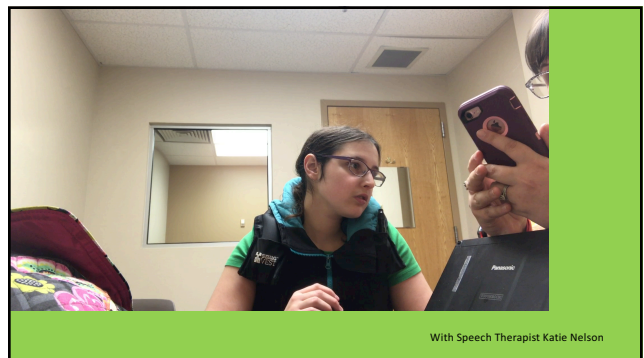
- I have different body parts and where, how much, how does it hurt, etc. on my Proloquo2go device.
- I can type to caregivers and doctors.

When it Hurt

- Then in August 2015 I started to experience quite a bit of pain, which I expressed through words and behaviors.
- BEHAVIOR is communication.
- If you notice a behavior that is unusual for the individual, consider possible medical causes.
- We trusted our gut, and in the end found out that I did have a chronic bladder condition and Fibromyalgia etc.

How AAC Helps when Frustrated

- I have a different way to ask for a break and express my feelings.
- I can ask for different sensory strategies or tools.
- This is more effective than other behavior that may occur when I'm frustrated.



With Speech Therapist Katie Nelson

AAC Supplementing Verbal Communication

- Helps add to what I want to say
- Helps expand on what I'm saying so that others can understand better
- Can help when I'm perseverating or saying the same thing over and over.



With Speech Therapist Katie Nelson



With Speech Therapist Katie Nelson
and her Student