Extended Abstract

Workshop Title

The Power of Humor When the Going Gets Tough: One Teen AAC User Shares

Target AGE GROUP

- School Aged

Target AUDIENCE

- Introductory / general knowledge level
  - Targeting early practitioners / researchers / families, OR covering a broad scope for a wide audience

STREAM

- Perspectives, Experiences, and Engagement of Consumers and Families

CONTENT FOCUS AREA

- People who use AAC: Views and experiences

Key LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify ways in which AAC devices, symbol systems, and/or techniques can increase the participation of individuals with congenital and/or acquired communication disabilities.
- Discuss issues related to policies and employment, including advocacy, regarding individuals who use AAC.

- Discuss the connections between cultural and social issues and AAC.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The first authors disclose she has the following financial or other interests in objects or entities mentioned in this paper: The author discloses that she collects a salary from
Easter Seals. The second author has no disclosures as he is a teenager who has not collected a salary or fees.

SHORT ABSTRACT (max 250 words)

Owen, a teen who uses AAC and Kate, a volunteer AAC Specialist at Camp Communicate in Maine, USA pair up to share lessons learned from each other. Owen will share his experiences as a person with disabilities and AAC user who attends general education classes at his local high school. Kate will share what she has learned from presenting to an audience that includes Owen over the past three summers. Together they will make you laugh as they demonstrate the do's, don't and I-can't-believe-anyone would-do-that's of, as Owen would say it “Using an arm to talk”.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT (max 1000 words - )

Owen is a teenager who attends his local high school in a rural community. He is one of the few individuals with complex communication needs in his area. He struggles with the usual tasks of being a teenager that all teenagers face – forming his identity, becoming independent, balancing school and home, facing decisions about his future. He is a power chair user and an AAC user but more often than not the issues of stigma, presumption of incompetence and lack of accessibility create more issues than the actual issues causes directly by his physical challenges. Owen uses humor and music to stay resilient as he faces these challenges. Each summer, Owen attends an augmentative and alternative communication family camp, Camp Communicate, where he met Kate. Kate is a special education teacher and an assistive technology specialist who focuses on complex communication needs and volunteers at Camp Communicate. Together Owen and Kate will share some of the challenges that are created by others perspectives towards those use AAC using humor to illustrate the prejudices, lack of boundaries and low expectations many people have towards those with complex communication needs. Owen will share his own experience in inclusion and dealing with the social challenges of adolescence and Kate will speak about the lessons she has learned from Owen. The audience will be asked to participate by thinking about small ways they can address stigma and low expectations through humor in their own communities.

REFERENCES


O’Flynn, P. (2015). Diverse Friendships Many programs teach teens with special needs how to be friends. This teenager turned the model around, teaching her typically developing peers how to be friends with a buddy with special needs. *The ASHA Leader, 20*(6), 72-72.

Program Planner/Instructional Personnel Relationship Disclosure Form

In compliance with American Speech-Language Hearing Association’s Continuing Education Board’s Requirements, ISAAC Conference 2016 requires program planners and instructional personnel to disclose information regarding any relevant financial and non-financial relationships related to course content prior to and during course planning.

Based on the information provided, ISAAC Conference 2016 will engage the program planner/instructional personnel in a guided interview process which seeks to understand how the relevant financial or nonfinancial relationship may influence the content of the course.

Program Planner/Instructional Personnel’s Name:  

Kate Ahern

Course Title:  

AAC Bootcamps for Professionals

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<th>HIPAA REQUIREMENTS</th>
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<td>To comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), we ask that all program planners and instructional personnel insure the privacy of their patients/clients by refraining from using names, photographs, or other patient/client identifiers in course materials without the patient’s/client’s knowledge and written authorization.</td>
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**Relevant financial relationships** are those relationships in which the individual benefits by receiving a salary, royalty, intellectual property rights, gift, speaking fee, consulting fee, honoraria, ownership interest (e.g., stocks, stock options, or other ownership interest, excluding diversified mutual funds), or other financial benefit. Financial relationships can also include “contracted research” where the institution gets the grant and manages the funds and the individual is the principal or named investigator on the grant.

Do you have relevant financial relationships to disclose?

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- [x] Yes (if yes complete Financial Relationship Disclosure Form)

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I attest that the information in this disclosure is accurate at the time of completion and I agree to notify ISAAC Conference 2016 ([conference2016@isaac-online.org](mailto:conference2016@isaac-online.org)) of any changes to this information between now and the scheduled presentation date. **I also understand that all completed Disclosure Forms must be incorporated within my paper proposal, as part of my Long or Extended abstract upload to the ISAAC Conference 2016 paper submission system.**

Signature  

Kate Ahern, M.S.Ed.

Digitally signed by Kate Ahern, M.S.Ed.  
DN: cn=Kate Ahern, M.S.Ed., o, ou, email=kahern@easterealsma.org, c=US  
Date: 2015.10.30 12:53:36 -04'00'

Date 22-Oct-2015
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Planner/Presenter name: Kate Ahern

Financial relationship with (name of Company/Organization): Easter Seals MA

Date form completed: 22-Oct-2015

What was received? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Salary
- [ ] Consulting fee
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- [ ] Speaking fee
- [ ] Royalty
- [ ] Honoraria
- [ ] Hold patent on equipment
- [ ] Other financial benefit (please describe):

For what role? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Employment
- [ ] Management position
- [ ] Teaching and speaking
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- [ ] Independent contractor (including contracted research)
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Planner/Presenter name: Kate Ahern

Non-financial relationship with (name of Company/Organization/Institution): AssistiveWare

Date form completed: 22-Oct-2015

What is the nature of the non-financial relationship? (Check and complete all that apply)

- [ ] Personal, please describe:
- [ ] Professional, please describe: I have presented workshops with the AssistiveWare Team
- [ ] Political, please describe:
- [ ] Institutional, please describe:
- [ ] Religious, please describe:
- [ ] Personal interest, please describe:
- [ ] Bias, please describe:
- [ ] Other relationship, please describe:

For what role?

- [ ] Volunteer employment
- [ ] Volunteer teaching and speaking
- [ ] Board membership
- [ ] Volunteer consulting
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- [✓] Other volunteer activities (please describe):
  - co-presenting