



Have Courage

Supporting a person in a new method of expression can be scary. You will learn together. It will get easier the more you do it.



It can feel intimidating when you are told that you need to learn a new skill.

Tips on how to learn new skills:

- Step outside your comfort zone. Be willing to try something new; it won't always feel comfortable.
- Break it down. What are the sub skills you need to learn?
- Focusing on one sub skill at a time is less overwhelming.
- Make it personal. How will this new skill benefit you or support your career? "Buy in".
- Learn by doing. Don't be afraid to be hands on!

AAC may be a brand new means of communication for your consumer. Do you need to know the device "perfectly"? No. **You simply need to be willing to explore the device together.**

These tips will make it easier:

- Make sure the device is charged and always available.
- Model AAC! Use the device to show someone how it works.
- Watch how your client communicates now. Observe and model on the device (laughing at TV show is a good time to model "funny").
- Explore together and talk about what you do.
- Use routines to offer choices. Daily routines are great communication chances!
- People learn best in natural environments. Use these for something to talk about.
- If you press the wrong button, don't worry— talk about it.

- Keep it in the moment. Use the device to talk about what you are doing here and now.
- Ask open-ended questions; they get more language than Yes/No questions.
- Give it time. You may need to model for a while before your client responds with the device
- If you ask a question, count to 20. Give your client time to craft their response.
- Don't worry about grammar. Start with modeling key words— sentences don't have to be long.
- Respond to your client's functional communication. That they get their message across is important—not perfect, grammatical utterances.