

**Technology Throughout the Employment  
Process: A Webinar Series**

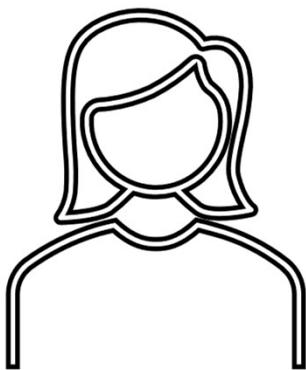
# **Technology Strategies for Communication and Behavior Support**



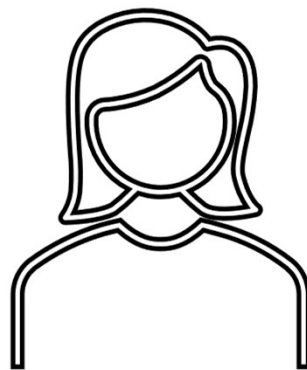
This webinar is offered by the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services.

[www.employmentfirstma.org](http://www.employmentfirstma.org)

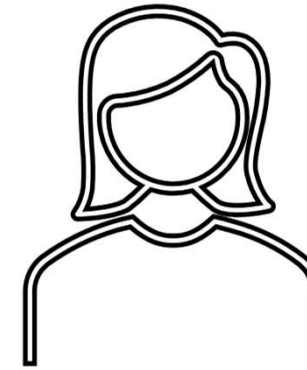
# Instructors



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# Agenda

- Discuss relationship between communication and behavior
- Identify signs of ineffective communication skills
- Learn strategies to increase effective communication skills of job seekers
- Understand how to identify functions of behaviors and brainstorm replacement behaviors
- Discover tech-based strategies to increase communication and behavioral success at work
- Question and Answer session from 10-10:30 am (optional)

# Domains of Technology

There are many domains of technology. The domains we will primarily cover today are:

## Assistive Technology

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

### - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

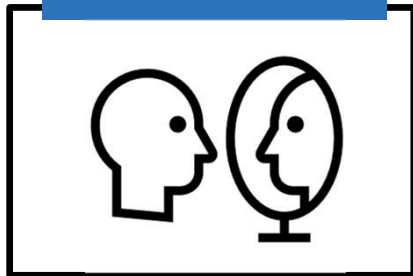
Communication devices, systems, strategies, and tools that replace or support natural speech.

## Educational Technology

A combination of computer hardware, software, and educational practices that facilitate learning.

# Why does communication matter?

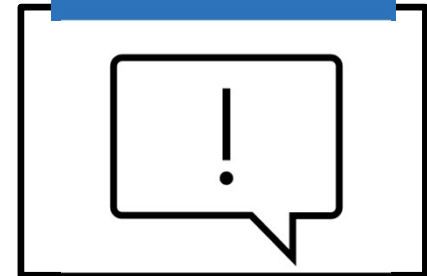
Dignity



Inclusion



Meaning



# Ineffective Communication & Behavior

When emotions, feelings, opinions, and thoughts cannot effectively be expressed via a communication system, they are often expressed via observable behavior.

Examples: frustration, anger, boredom, fear, anxiety, etc.

# What do we mean by *behavior*?

- Behavior is simply the way a person is conducting themselves in a certain environment
- “Behavior” can often be used in a negative manner, but in truth, everyone is “behaving” in a certain way all the time.
  - There are many factors that contribute to the way people behave
  - There are many factors that contribute to how people control- or lose control of- their behaviors

# What is “stimming”?

- Stimming, or self-stimulatory behaviors are atypical behaviors that are often repetitive
  - Can be a component of autism or other similar diagnoses
  - Are often a way for a person to regulate or cope with stress
  - Often cannot be easily stopped or controlled by the individual, but can sometimes be replaced and/or shaped



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# Functional Communication

## Is:

- Understandable to many
- Effective for the messages a person wants to convey
- As user-friendly as possible
- Satisfactory (or better) to the user
- Accessible at all times
- Culturally and age aligned

## Is not:

- Only understandable to a select few
- Insufficient for the messages a person wants to convey
- Inaccessible to the user, physically or otherwise
- Cumbersome to the user
- Short-term or temporary

Failing to facilitate a means for communication is harmful.

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# Communication Considerations

Learn more about:

- receptive language (what a person can understand/comprehend)
  - expressive language (what a person can express)
  - literacy (what a person can read and write)
  - memory (what a person remembers over time)
  - cognitive load (how much a person can process at once)
  - physical and motor ability
-

# Behavior Challenges: Analyzing the Situation

- Is this a real problem?
- Is it fair to change behavior?
- What is the history of the behavior?
- What is the person getting from engaging in the behavior?

Remember:

- *Nearly all behaviors serve an adaptive purpose.*
- *All behaviors will not respond to same intervention.*

# Behavior Challenges:

## Describe the Behavior

- What does the behavior look like?
- When does it occur?
- Where does it occur?
- With whom does it occur?
- Is the behavior rhythmic or cyclical?
- Are there physical symptoms with the behavior (ex: headache)?

# What impacts the behavior?

## Demand

Tasks/Activities  
Schedule  
Cognitive Load  
Expectations

## Environment

Physical (or Sensory)  
Social/Culture  
Internal experience

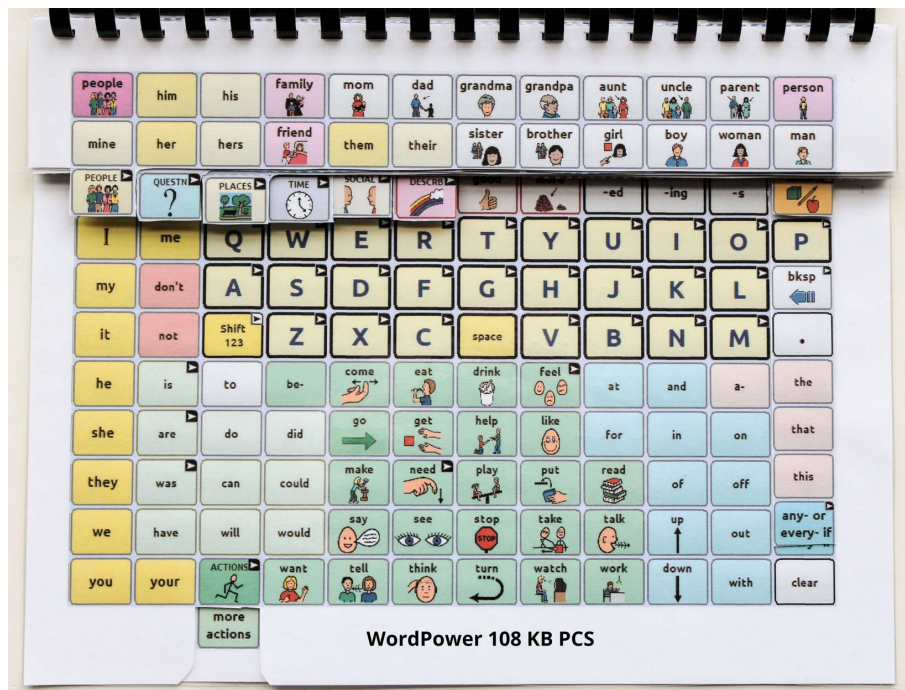
## Reinforcement

Response from others  
Increased expression  
Decreased stress  
Get desired outcome

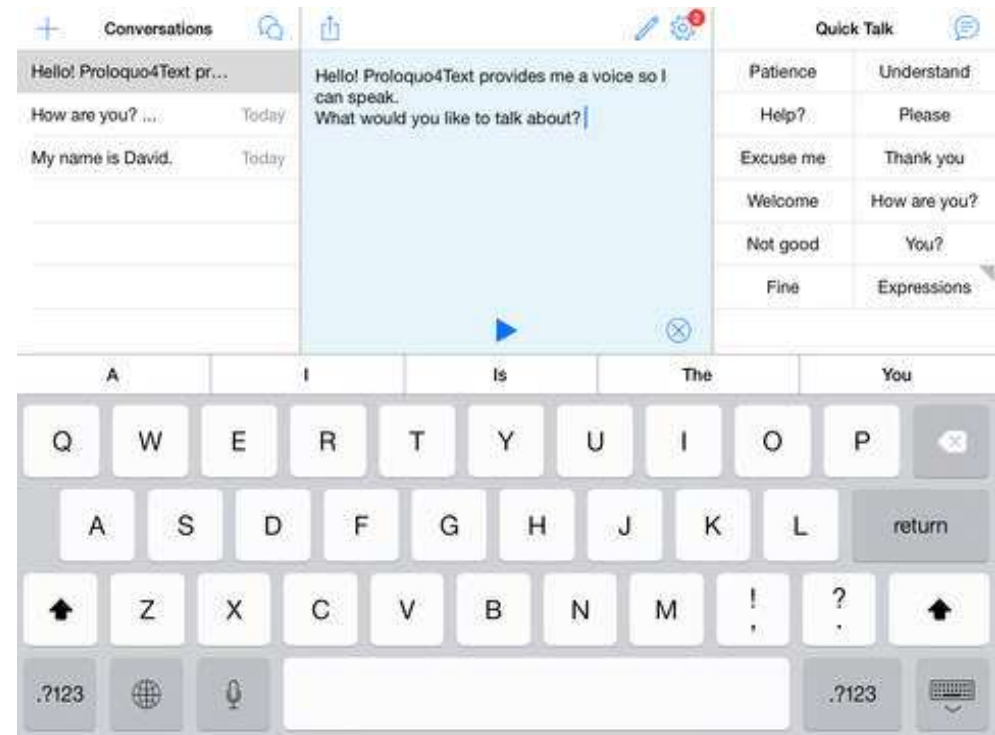
# Behavior Challenges: Finding Solutions

- Preventative Strategies
  - How can behavior be reduced by changing conditions?
  - Identify ways to prevent the behavior from occurring
  - Increase communication options and reduce cognitive load
  - Plan and schedule breaks accordingly
- Find Alternatives
  - Work to find suitable replacement behaviors that meet the need
- Plan a Response
  - Develop a protocol for managing behaviors that is respectful, person-centered, and in line with the values of the individual
  - Create routine and predictability when possible
- Stay in line with Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) to ensure dignity, health, and safety (115 CMR 5.14)

# Communication Supports



TouchChat with Word Power Flip Book








Proloquo4Text iPad Screenshot

# Emotional/Sensory Regulation

**My Coping Skills Plan**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How I feel:

				
Happy	Sad	Worried	Frustrated	Mad

I have a SMALL MEDIUM BIG problem.

What upsets me: \_\_\_\_\_

My body shows I'm upset by: \_\_\_\_\_

Things I can do to feel better: \_\_\_\_\_









Others can help me by: \_\_\_\_\_

When my feelings get too big, I can talk to: \_\_\_\_\_

Coping Skills Plan to work through dysregulation



## Toolkit Ideas for Hearing

Sensory Type	Accommodation Ideas
 <p><b>Seeker</b> (seems to want more)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Headphones with preferred music/podcast</li> <li>- Playing music/TV/noise machine as background noise</li> <li>- Opportunities to hum, stim, or create preferred noises</li> </ul> 
 <p><b>Avoidant</b> (seems to want less)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Noise-canceling headphones, limited background noise</li> <li>- Headphones with preferred music/podcast</li> <li>- Control over seating in proximity to others/noises</li> <li>- Extended wait time for processing</li> </ul> 
 <p><b>Sensitive</b> (seems to notice a lot)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Noise-canceling headphones, limited background noise</li> <li>- Headphones with preferred music/podcast</li> <li>- Control over seating in proximity to others/noises</li> <li>- Limit/plan for changes in environment</li> </ul> 
 <p><b>Under-Reactive</b> (doesn't seem to notice much)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Headphones with preferred music/podcast</li> <li>- Upbeat/pleasant music in the environment</li> <li>- Preferential proximity to speaker/conversation partner</li> <li>- Extended wait time for processing</li> </ul> 

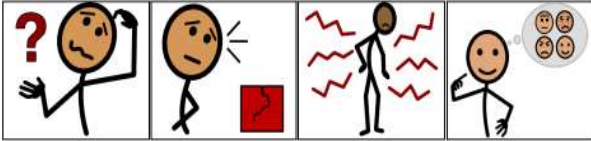
Sensory Toolkit guide for accommodation planning



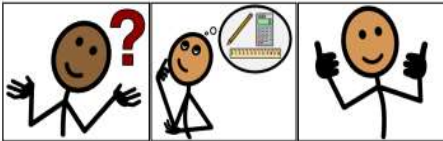
# Self-Care Planning

## Steps to Making a Self-Care Plan (with icons)

1) What need do I have that isn't being met? What does my body or my emotions tell me about this need?



2) What will help get this need taken care of? Think of something that is soothing or helpful when that need occurs.



3) When this need comes up in different environments, how will I safely meet it then?



4) Who should I tell about this plan? Who needs to know?



## Steps to Making a Self-Care Plan (text only)

1. What need do I have that isn't being met? What does my body or my emotions tell me about this need?








2. What will help get this need taken care of? Think of something that is soothing or helpful when that need occurs.

3. When this need comes up in different environments, how will I safely meet it then?

4. Who should I tell about this plan? Who needs to know?

# Visuals for task completion

**Refilling a water bottle**

- 1) Set bottle on desk.  

- 2) Open bottle and set lid on desk.  

- 3) Set water refill jug on desk.  

- 4) Open water refill jug.  

- 5) Pour water from jug into bottle.  

- 6) Close water refill jug and put away.  

- 7) Close water bottle.  


Visual Instructions



Tap to hear instructions

Go to previous step

Go to next step

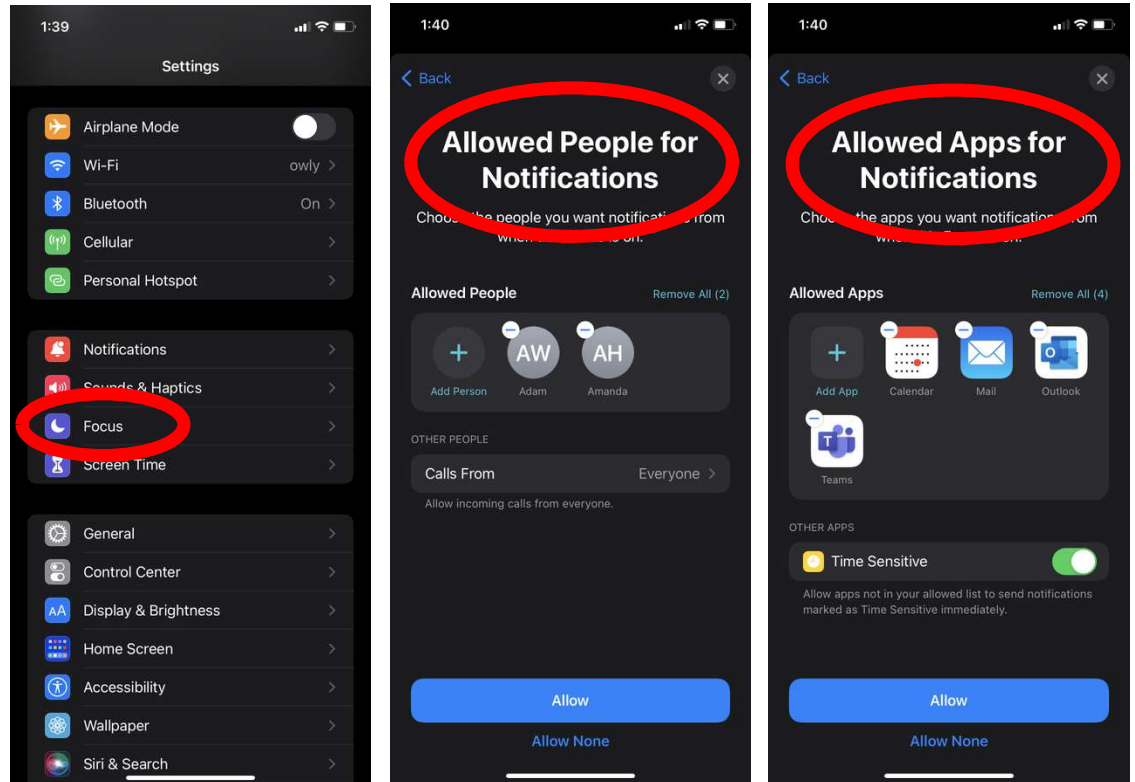
Tap to hear your text read aloud

Pictello (app for using personalized text and photos to create stories or event sequences)

# Redirecting habits



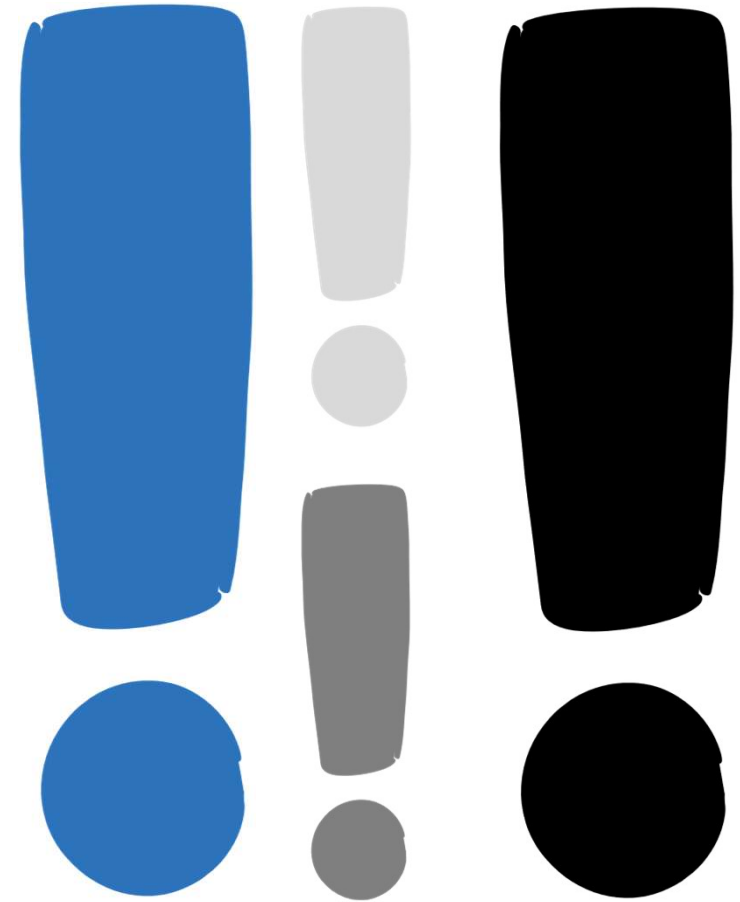
Keen by HabitAware



Apple iOS Settings, Focus feature

# Technology Best Practice

- Technology solutions are individualized
- Preferred technology is accessible to and used by the individual
- Technology is solution-focused
- Technology relies minimally, if at all, on direct support
- It is assumed that technology competency will grow over time
- Interactions with the individual include necessary and beneficial technology



# A Word from Jennifer Petersen

# Department of Developmental Services

# *Technology Forward*



Through the Technology Forward Initiative, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will promote the use of *Supportive Technology*. People with disabilities will have an opportunity to use Supportive Technology to live more inclusive and independent lives.

Supportive Technology services offers individuals the opportunity to use Assistive Technology (AT) exclusively or in combination with Remote Supports & Monitoring (RSM) to maximize their potential.

## **WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT) SERVICES?**

1. Assistive technology consultation/evaluation is a review of your wants and needs. This is done to identify what AT you could use. The evaluation will be completed by one or all of the following professionals:
  - A licensed professional including OT, PT, SLP
  - A certified AT Professional (ATP)

**They will meet you in your home, workplace,  
or wherever you will use the AT**

2. Assistive technology devices are the equipment or devices recommended through the AT evaluation. DDS covers the cost if you cannot afford, or if the item is not insurance billable.
3. Assistive technology support is the set-up of AT equipment, education, and training to help you use assistive technology.

# Who is eligible and how to access Assistive Technology Services offered by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)?



If you been determined eligible for DDS services through the Intake and Eligibility process, you can access Assistive Technology Services.

**For individuals who are 22+ or 18 + and no longer in school**, the following steps should be followed to assist people to access assistive technology services to promote their independence:

1. Complete the DDS Assistive Technology Screening Assessment to identify areas that person has barriers and which areas they would like to have greater independence.
2. Send the completed assessment to the person's DDS Service Coordinator and request a referral to a contracted Assistive Technology Provider. (*Community based Organizations*)

**For individuals who are less than 22 and have flexible funding available through family support or the DESE/DDS partnership program**, the family **can choose** to use such flexible funding to pay for assistive technology services:

**How are flexible funding/stipend allocations administered?** Families can receive their flexible Funding allocation in the following ways:

- ✓ Reimbursement from the Family Support Provider to the family for expenses incurred for allowable services and/or goods;
- ✓ Direct payment to a vendor by the family support provider for specific allowable goods and services requested by the family.

**Follow steps 1-2 noted above**

# Department of Developmental Services:

<https://www.mass.gov/supportive-technology>

## Supportive Technology

Information about assistive technology and remote supports and monitoring

Through the Technology Forward Initiative, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will promote and develop the use of Supportive Technology as an opportunity for more inclusive and independent lives for people with disabilities.

Supportive Technology is the use of Assistive Technology (AT) exclusively or in combination with Remote Supports & Monitoring (RSM) to support individuals to maximize their potential.

## What you need to know

[More on Assistive Technology & Providers →](#)

[More on Remote Supports & Providers →](#)

[Collapse all](#)


### Additional Resources

(8) —

[DDS Use of Technology that Monitors or Tracks Guidance 2022 →](#)

[Technology Forward Report \(July 2021\) →](#)

 [DDS Technology Forward Initiative April 2021](#) (English, PPTX 1.93 MB)

 [Supportive Technology Services Description](#) (English, PDF 264.81 KB)

 [Remote Support and Monitoring Qualified Provider List](#) (English, PDF 117.55 KB)

 [DDS Choosing Remote Supports Flyer Individual](#) (English, PDF 220.22 KB)

 [AT Qualified Provider List](#) (English, PDF 171.74 KB)

 [DDS Supportive Technology Quick Reference Guide](#) (English, PDF 606.94 KB)



# Useful Resources

- Department of Developmental Services:  
<https://www.mass.gov/supportive-technology>  
<https://www.mass.gov/news/dds-releases-new-positive-behavior-support-pbs-regulations>
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission:  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mrc-il-assistive-technology-program>
- JAN  
<https://askjan.org/>
- ICI Covid Publications  
<https://covid19.communityinclusion.org/>
- Planning for Autism  
<https://planningforautism.com/education/for-autistic-learners/>

# Thank you!

Survey: [https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_81Xa5ZpZixfKs62](https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_81Xa5ZpZixfKs62)

Next Webinar: **Technology Tools for Employment Professionals**

**May 23, 2023**

**9-10:30AM ET**

Stick Around for Q & A Session (optional)