

Communication Supports Tutorial — Transcript

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Timestamps correspond to the source recording. Speaker changes are not labeled when the audio does not make the speaker's identity certain. Bracketed text describes meaningful non-speech activity.

Welcome and introductions [00:00:00]

[00:00:09] Welcome to our workshop on communication supports, our boards and cards. That is a companion for the Elevatus Training Relationship and Sexuality curriculum. I am going to share my slides. Terrific. So our plan today is to talk with you about best practices for using these supports. And then we will go through actually using some of them. Dan and I will show you how to do that and then take questions while we're doing that and then afterwards. So we have an awesome small group live here today and it'll be great to take your questions and be able to have a conversation. So please feel free to, if you have questions during the slides, to put it into chat and I think Catherine or Helene can see that while I'm doing the slides. And then after during the discussion we can just unmute you when you want to talk. All right. So I heard some of you already have your cards and boards which is so exciting. I know we have ours right here, our cards and boards. So we're going to show you in real time. We were kind

of joking before these were the beta versions, the very first prototypes to come out. So you'll get to see those. Can you sit down and stay with us? Can you sit down please? No? Okay. So before we introduce ourselves, I'm curious who is here?

[00:01:37] I see, I think we have six or seven people. And maybe just if you could tell me who you are in the chat, including what your role is, if you're an educator or a family member or something else I haven't thought of. Take a second to do that. Awesome. Laura is an occupational therapist. Cheyenne is a registered nurse, and her mother is a nurse educator—awesome. Crystal is a service coordinator at Community Crossroads in New Hampshire. I'm guessing that's a service organization. Okay. Izzy is a sex educator with Planned Parenthood of Delaware, working with people with disabilities, also an activist. Awesome. Annie has three sons with autism and a husband with autism and a company that supports people. And then Renee is a program manager. What is MHMR? Is that a state thing? And then I see Chris is a speech pathologist from Wisconsin. This is a wonderful, I think, like cross section of both geography and sort of occupation. This is very exciting. All right. Renee, so my health, my resources. That's a great name. Very cool. Thank you. Okay. So Catherine mentioned that she and I met when I came to one of their trainings, gosh, now two years ago, I think, something like that in Massachusetts, where I grew up. I now live in California. I've been here about 15 years. Dan and I are in his house now in the LA area. And so I am founder and executive director of a nonprofit that supports people with disabilities, also an adjunct professor at Cal State Northridge in the graduate school of

[00:03:51] education. So that's my background in education. I'm also with Elevatus, surprise, surprise, an advisory council member of Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, which is an adaptive sports nonprofit in the mountains of California, where I also live part-time. An educational consultant, a researcher, and then board member president of Cal-TASH, if anyone's familiar with TASH, national TASH is a large organization that supports people advocating for their rights and has a great conference every year. So, yeah, my background is as a teacher. I taught students with disabilities. I was an assistant principal at a very young age, probably wasn't a good idea, and then quit because I got so frustrated, you know, as the common story goes. And we started Ignite seven years ago now. So we're almost starting our eighth year. And part of that journey was really learning from the people that we wanted to support and their families and figuring out what was needed out there. And then focusing on my passions, one of which is relationships and sexuality, another which is communication. And Dan will tell you his story about how he learned to type. And I'll show you, Dan uses an iPad with a regular old QWERTY keyboard, so you'll get to hear

[00:05:15] Essentially, everything I had learned as an educator was overturned when Dan learned how to type. I learned that he was smart, that he heard everything I said, and that he was way smarter than me in many areas. I needed to reevaluate what I had been doing, support people who use alternative ways of communicating, and teach others how to provide that support. Part of my role is training people to support communication, so if you have questions as we go, I'm happy to answer them.

Dan's story and introductory video [00:05:58]

[00:05:58] Dan is going to show you his video, which is about five or six minutes long. I'm going to turn up the volume; let me know if you can hear it. It starts quietly, so give it a second. And if it's not playing, I'm going to find you, it looks like it's not going to do it in the slides. So I'm going to stop sharing for one second and find the actual video file. Molly, when you share your screen at the bottom of the share, there's a couple things to check that supposedly help videos sound better.

[00:06:53] You'll see it at the bottom when it says like PowerPoint, you click on where you want to share what you want to share. Oh, look at that. Thank you. Learn things every day. Under the waves of my unruly body lies a mind as deep as the sea. Though my face does not show any part of all I know, my soul feels the hot and cold currents beneath.

[00:08:06] I'm sad that they think I'm dumb. I was excluded my entire time in the school district. I can't think of any time I was treated as intelligent. My teachers talked to us like we were pets and drilled us in baby stuff like colors and numbers.

[00:09:05] My teachers did not believe I did my own homework because they never got to see me type. It was a joke. My high school, I know, it's where I got my diploma, but I'm still mad at them how they treat my brother. They didn't want to even try. It was like a total closed-mindedness. I remember going in there and looking at the curriculum, it's like, like not even grade level. It's like, like at least two grade levels below. I learned to type a few years ago and it changed my life. Before that everyone thought I was stupid,

and now at least some people believe I am smart. I realized I had no idea how competent he was—how grade-level, if you will—how much he knew. I mean, we had no idea.

[00:09:58] I have known Dan, I think, nine or ten years now. Dan is one of the most academically smart people that I know, including beyond myself. His ability, his math and science ability are far beyond my own. Dan was very adamant that he was getting out of that classroom. "I want to learn real things. I want to go to college." Yet, coming from the top within the school district was this philosophy of no, we're never going to do this. And we basically got to that point where, you know, it was do the homeschooling and file for due process.

[00:10:54] We decided that homeschooling would allow me to access real academics. It was truly the only option because my school district would not allow me to type. I am thankful that we had the resources to leave. Tonight like all others, I lay awake waiting to free my mind and body. I will not let the night get the best of my soul. I think about the atmospheric pressure pressing all around. I yell when time passes by. A scary gigantic atmosphere surrounds me. It is my job to stay above the depths. I want to go to college. So my story does not end like others who don't talk.

[00:11:51] We're going to pause here. You can see there's a few more minutes and I'm happy to share. Actually, Dan, you need to put it on your website. Let me get back to my slide. There we go.

Presuming competence and behavior as communication [00:12:15]

[00:12:15] All right. Dan often shares this video as a way of introducing himself instead of saying I'm a speaker or I'm a college student. A big part of that is presuming competence. I'm sure most of you have heard of this idea. It's from Douglas Biklen from Syracuse University. The idea that any person wants to and can learn and it's our job to assume that that's possible and give them opportunities. That's what we're trying to do with these boards and cards too.

[00:13:06] We know there may be ideas stuck inside that can't come out verbally, so how can we access them another way? Dan types on a regular keyboard, as I showed you. For demonstration's sake, he is going to point to these supports. I also work with people who point but are not typing or using another method yet. Unfortunately, at this time in our lives, we're not really seeing each other. If you'd like insight into how that works in our agency, we can talk about that too. The person is not giving you a hard time. If we're teaching about relationships and sexuality and someone can't answer, stands up and leaves, yells, or does something else, we need to think about what support is needed.

Qualities of a good communication partner [00:14:04]

[00:14:08] What can I do to support whatever is going on right now because I don't think he's doing it to me intentionally. In many of my roles we ask people what it takes to be a good communication partner. This information comes from people like Dan and a lot of other people we support who type, point, or use eye gaze to communicate. They want people to be calm, relaxed, confident, unflappable which I love this word and trustworthy. So

really somebody who can sit with a person and you'll see me here too kind of being a regulation partner not just a communication partner.

[00:14:56] If Dan's having a hard time regulating his body I might quietly give him some feedback like take a breath or do something else that helps him get his body under control. Also confidence we hear is a huge one not that you know everything but that you have confidence in the person and their ability to communicate. So really imparting that you're co-regulating with them. I know you have it. Let's do it. So in order to do that you must presume competence also being flexible. We all do this all day long right. So we're ready to change, adapt, figure out what's going on, problem solve if there's an issue in the moment.

[00:15:39] Being persistent so not just giving one opportunity to communicate, trying again and again, trying in different ways that you need to be consistent. So supporting communication regularly and reliably doing it in the same way. If it's working not just trying something new because you feel like it if you do try something new it's for a reason. Also on a regular basis so when Dan learned to type we had known each other probably five years already. And it took probably six months until a whole real sentence came out right. And that was with about 10 hours a week of practicing. So here we're not teaching you to type but we are saying it's going to take some time and we need to be consistent with that.

[00:16:28] So if you have a class every week do it every week. You see the person more often than that then practice in other ways and we can talk about how to do that. So being engaging and interactive certainly this topic I think is engaging for the people in your classes. Definitely people want to

talk about relationships and sex and all the stuff that comes along with that. So that's motivating that's real. We don't want to like you know just practice for the sake of practicing. We want to actually interact with people. Being patient also I think something we probably all do every day.

[00:17:02] Be patient and allow time for communication to happen. Don't put out the board, expect an immediate answer, and then decide it didn't work. Always have the person's communication support available—in Dan's case, his device or iPad; in this case, your lesson-specific or everyday boards and cards. It shouldn't be something the person has to go through an extra layer to access. Also provide the least amount of support necessary. That can vary by person, task, and day.

Prompting and robust AAC [00:17:49]

[00:17:49] In supporting communication, we always want to give the least amount of support. If Dan already knows how to use these, I might simply put one out and ask, "What do you think?" If he needs more, I might add a visual, verbal, or gestural prompt. You'll see an X near the bottom of the slide where it says full physical prompts. In my educational experience, we never want to use those for communication. There is no way to know that the answer reflects the person's thoughts if you physically prompt it.

[00:18:48] So definitely not that and when I'm talking about partial physical prompt I'm going to show you some of that with Dan a little later I know where there were some questions when we were kind of testing out like what does it mean when you say touch someone on the shoulder. So we can we can look at what that looks like. So we also want to be sure that what we're doing is robust and this is from the great Erin Sheldon. If you're not

familiar with her, I recommend looking her up. She's an amazing person and a parent. So she talks about the person being able to say anything anytime anywhere to anyone.

[00:19:28] Certainly so now we're talking very specific topics here this is not something you're going to take out you know in onto the bus and it's going to be relevant or into the grocery store. The idea though is that they're always available so they can say anything on here at any time to anyone in the class. So ideally I know Catherine talks about having more than one teacher or instructor. If you have that and both of you should be able to use these supports. I'm thinking to you know if there's a topic that comes up that maybe the person isn't comfortable with one of the instructors that they could use it to talk with the other instructor.

[00:20:08] Sufficient vocabulary is huge. We're talking about real anatomical terms, consent, and the words people use for the people in their lives. The vocabulary on these boards comes directly from the lessons. People who use these communication systems often are not introduced to those words, so I'm very excited that they will be able to talk about sex and other parts of life from which they are usually excluded. Robust AAC—augmentative and alternative communication—supports a broad range of needs. The everyday board includes yes and no, feelings, readiness to participate, discomfort, questions, and "I don't understand." It isn't limited to yes/no or a few choices.

Modeling the boards and offering real choices [00:21:15]

[00:21:25] So before we support somebody in using this, we want to model it for them. So if I can see some of you, how many have used a curriculum or support like this before, like a raised hand or a thumbs up or a nod. I see one

from Chris Laura. Okay. Alright, great. Dan's running off with me. So if you want to model it first, and that means actually using it yourself. So because this is someone's communication tool with this or, you know, the iPad or anything else, we want to ask for consent. Is it okay if I touch your iPad? Is it okay if I touch your communication board?

[00:22:10] And then obviously, because we're all familiar with consent, if the person says no, then we need to figure out another way to do that. Here's how we're going to use it. And then I'm going to actually use this with the person and show them. So now I'm making sure I can see. I want to talk about being safe. So I'm going to point my finger and I'm going to touch safe. So you're actually doing it yourself. And this goes for any device that you're using as well. And make sure that you talk through what you're doing every step of the way. And make sure also they're watching and listening. Obviously, I know it looks different for every person.

[00:22:51] Erin Sheldon also distinguishes real choices from forced choices, which is especially relevant when talking about consent. With a real choice, the person can ask for something that wasn't offered, say no, reject all the options, ask for more information, and choose on their own terms. It isn't a life-or-death decision, and the person can give or revoke consent. So those are real choices. So you can also change your mind. I think I need to add to this.

[00:23:47] So if you're saying, you know, in the beginning of class, hey, yeah, I'm ready. I'm good. Like let's do class. And then at some point during the, you know, you're not feeling so hot or maybe you're uncomfortable about

something, you can kind of take that back and say, I changed my mind. I'm not ready. I need to take some time. So I'm going to add that. All right.

Physical access and troubleshooting [00:24:11]

[00:24:11] So before we practice this in person, I have on here a whiteboard, which is another great way of communicating with people. So in order to use any sort of device like this, an iPad, a whiteboard, the cards, the boards, you want to make sure the person has pointing or gazing skills. So we first need to figure out if the person's going to use their body physically, motorically, or if they are using their eyes because these can be used with both. If the person is physically going to use these, then we want to make sure that they can isolate a finger. It doesn't have to be the pointer. It could be thumb. It could be anything.

[00:24:51] And that they can hold that at least steadily enough to go toward what they're pointing. I don't have a marker with me. One of the great supports that we use if someone has trouble isolating a finger is to hold like an Expo marker, a dry erase marker in the hand. And then it gives that hand something else to do, something else to grip on. I'm sure the OT in here can tell me what exactly is going on. We find that very helpful. So then they can isolate that way. If the person is gazing, then we want to figure out what that looks like also.

[00:25:29] If the person uses eye gaze, determine what access looks like for them. Can they see something straight ahead, or does it need to be off to the side or below? We support someone with a very hunched posture, so her device is placed below her. Make sure the person can see the support and gesture toward, point to, or look at every available choice. We think to, you

know, Dan gives you an example. He has a great deal of trouble crossing his midline, which is like this line down the middle of your body. And so he's left handed and when he types the iPad is like way over on the left.

[00:26:27] Because if it's in the middle, then all he's going to be able to access is the left side of the keyboard. So think about to, are we placing it for Dan? We put it way over here on his left. I probably wouldn't put it over there. And you can see his body kind of gets stuck when I put it on the other side. So ensure that the person can identify each choice that you're giving. Here, for example, on the whiteboard I have: agree, disagree, not sure, or something else. And so in that case, I would first hold this up where they can see and I can see this is different on Zoom. So he can see and I can see his eyes and what he's answering.

[00:27:11] I can see that you can look over here, right? Your eyes are looking. I can see that you can reach it. Awesome. Then I would ask: Do you want to talk about confidentiality or relationships? Those are our choices. First I ask the person to identify them. Can you touch confidentiality? You're looking at the board. Can you lift your arm and touch confidentiality? Good. And how about relationships? You lift up relationship. Awesome. So there, I'm just asking for identification so that I know he knows where they are. I'm only asking for identification so I know he knows where the choices are; I'm not asking him to choose yet. Then I would ask whether we're talking about confidentiality or relationships.

[00:27:54] Then for troubleshooting, we want to make sure to watch for patterns. I know a lot of people we support kind of get stuck in what we call motor loops. And that's doing the same thing, motorically or even verbally

over and over again. And so that might mean always choosing the upper left option or tapping all four options before making a choice or fill in the blank. You all know your people that might look different for everybody. So I would really keep an eye on that. And if possible, maybe move the board in a different area so that maybe that top left choice is not always right there where the finger goes. I might cover part of the board if it's not relevant and your fingers always going there.

[00:28:39] So really take away the visual or cover it with a piece of paper. It's yours. You could fold it if you wanted to. I'm not going to do it to this one. I might, if I'm using a whiteboard for something, I would have maybe erase that or leave that top left blank. And then over time, if we are using something like a whiteboard also, we could grow choices because we could add more. These are kind of static, but they do have more space on them, blank space, and they're yours. If you wanted to add other stuff that's relevant, you could add stuff on there. You could draw little boxes and figures or stick figures like I would be doing or print out little images and stick them on there.

[00:29:20] All right. So I will give you these slides. These are resources. Please don't feel the need to write them down right now. There are a whole list of self advocates, advocates who type in point and gaze to communicate and then also some more people and programs to get some more training. So I'm going to end this guy and stop that. Alright, are there questions yet before Dan and I kind of practice in person?

Questions about AAC support [00:29:47]

[00:29:52] I have a question. Would someone who has AAC, is that correct terminology? AAC? Yeah. I'm sorry, AAC. Would they list that, like when we do our interview with them, would that be something that they would list? And if so, would it be helpful or harmful to provide an assistant for that one particular person if you could? Let's say you have a college student who is working with this demographic and would like the experience of working with someone with this type of communication skill. Would that be offensive to have someone there for them or would that be helpful? Well, to your first question, definitely ask in your intake or your interview or whatever kind of process you have.

[00:30:57] How do you communicate is usually how I put it. Or how do you best communicate and then have like check boxes. They could choose more than one. Some people do speak and type. Some people use sign language and communication boards. They could be a combination. Oftentimes, if someone does use an AAC device, more often than not, they do have a communication partner. Dan has, how many of you have now? Seven, I think. So one of those people might be able to come. And if not, if someone is willing to learn and do that, then yeah, I would offer that and make it the choice for the person. If you have this great college student, blah, blah, blah, she's learning this, would it be okay with you? Ask consent.

[00:31:45] Would it be okay with you if she helped you communicate? And then also be aware that building that relationship is really important. It's not just going to happen. And we want to make sure that there's a level of trust. And it's kind of an intimate thing to be helping somebody

communicate. Sure. You know, that's why I thought maybe it would be insulting to ask that or maybe not. So, no, thank you for answering. Yeah, of course. Any other questions?

Live board demonstration [00:32:17]

[00:32:17] No? Alrighty. So I'm going to try. Okay. So I'm going to take Dan's iPad off now for the time being. He has this neat stand that he uses for his iPad. It collapses a little too. So it travels. They're like \$12 on Amazon. And I find that they're also really useful to put your boards on so you can also put your boards. All right. And the cards too. But, okay. Let's try to turn it this way. Okay. All right. So I have this lesson one right here. This is the Getting Started lesson. You're introducing everyone to themselves and to each other. Having some feedback choices here. If you can see, I like what you're saying. I don't like it.

[00:33:16] Sort of a range there and then some basic vocabulary. Something that we've done on all of the boards is color code these. So if you can see in here. There's some yellows or oranges greens and then consent here is always up in the top left in red. Because if somebody wants to talk about consent, it ought to be there. It ought to be accessible all the time. And hopefully in a color that is able to be seen pretty clearly. And if you haven't gotten these yet, you can tell the lesson by looking at the bottom here. So this one says getting started. So there's 22 right for 22 lessons and then one sort of the general one that Dan took somewhere else.

[00:34:00] All right. So for Dan, I'm going to put it on his stand because this is something he's used to doing for other people. I might hold it. So again, let's see if you can see. There we go. So we're sitting next to each other. Yep,

I'm holding it in a place where I can see his eyes. So I know that he's looking. And I can also see what he's pointing at. So I don't want to hold it like this because then I can't see what he's pointing at. That makes sense. Okay.

[00:34:30] So we might practice first. If this is a brand new skill, I could hold this up and I could say look here. I'm pointing to a corner. So I just want your eyes right with your eyes and then I'm watching his eyes. Your eyes and your eyes. So now I know that he can see the whole board and that he is able to move his eyes and tracks. So if he wasn't able to see part of it, then I would make a physical adjustment move it one way or another.

[00:34:57] So my next step is to, I know he can point. Oh, I also know what hand he uses. So that's an important thing to figure out first. Some people use both. Some people are really preferential. Dan happens to type left handed. So he also points left handed eats right handed. So it would be an important thing to find out. So then I'm going to ask him to identify something on here so that I know he's looking. I'm not going to go through all of them right now. Just as an example, I'll do one or two. So I can again watch his eyes, watch his hand. And then for Dan, I know his body can be kind of compulsive.

[00:35:34] So it's pointing when he's not really ready to point. So I would watch for that too to see if it was, you know, he's pointing and I haven't even asked. Then I know that that's not a reliable answer and I would kind of reset. Ready? All right. So can you touch consent? Awesome. So that was super intentional. I saw him look and his hand went right for it. How about me look up. Thank you. Hold on. So how about safe look first? Look with

your eyes and then point to safe. Beautiful. Okay. So there's an example of some kind of whoa, that was way too fast. Let's back up.

[00:36:17] And then also some coaching about where to put your eyes because I find it impossible to look down and, you know, point at something that you can't see. I do know a lot of people talk about having very strong peripheral vision and people who maybe don't like to make eye contact or maybe have sensitivity to light or other things. Best practice in this kind of communication is to have them look at the board or whatever they're looking at because then we know for sure that that's happening. So I would talk through that with the person, you know, hey, I know your eyes are really strong. But so that I know that you're communicating what you want to communicate.

[00:36:58] Let's practice it looking on the board. Makes sense. Okay. So now I know Dan can point. He can see everything he can identify things. So then I might ask. So over here on this left side again is the like what you're saying. I love it or it's totally love it. And then I don't like it on the other side. So I might ask. Hold on. So I might ask hypothetically. Do you like it or you don't like it. So that I saw his eyes looked at the screen instead of the board. So I'm going to ask again, make sure you're looking at the whole board. Yeah. So do you like it or you don't like it.

[00:37:40] So I'm going to keep moving it left because it seems like his body's having trouble. Well, then. So you're looking over here. Do you like it or you don't like it. And says I totally love what you're saying. So that that is a board in a very quick nutshell and I love your questions or what specifically we can show you that would be helpful.

Open-ended communication and follow-up questions [00:38:09]

[00:38:09] So I think you can unmute yourself if you want to ask a question or give us feedback. Crystal, you're raising your hand. Can you unmute yourself? Yes. Hi. Can you hear me? Okay. I was wondering, you mentioned some of the options that should be on the boards are more like open ended ones. Like the thing that I want isn't here or like. I want more information or things. Can you just like coach us through how you would go about trying to get more information from a person using the boards. Yes—not on that lesson board, but those options are on the general board: things like "I don't understand," "I disagree," and "I'm not comfortable with this." So then I would give some choices. If I know the person, right? Hopefully I do. If I'm teaching this kind of thing to somebody.

[00:39:21] And the easiest way I find to do choices is with my two hands. Super low tech, right? So say we're talking about consent and the person says I have a question about consent. Or I have a question. And that's kind of as far as the board goes, right? So then I would ask the question. Do you have a question about consent or is it something else that Dan says about consent? So I would put up my two hands. This is also skill that you should teach first to know the person has it. Don't just like, you know, hey, I expect you to answer this weird thing I'm doing. Dan and I do this all the time. He's very reliable answering that way.

[00:39:58] The hard thing is that it's binary, right? There's only two choices. But also you hear that I give the option of something else. So is it about consent? Because that's what we're talking about. Or is it about something else? So if it's consent, okay, cool. So then I can go down that range. Was it

about something in the lesson? Is it something in your life? I can continue down that area. If he responds, no, it's something else, then I need to know maybe the person and ask some more questions to get into. Is the question about class or is it about something else? If it's about class, okay, so what might it be about? Is it about your classmates? Is it about, you know, when are we taking a break?

[00:40:41] How long is this thing? Those are all things that could come up to. Does that kind of answer your question? Okay. And it takes time. Anyone who supports communication will tell you it takes a lot of time. And you'll kind of like dig one question at a time.

Using communication supports in broader situations [00:41:00]

[00:41:00] One participant observed that some students have trauma backgrounds, selective mutism, or severe anxiety, and that these boards could support their participation in sexuality education without requiring speech or even a head shake or nod. Molly agreed and mentioned resources about people who can speak reliably but also choose to use augmentative communication. Another participant asked how to use the boards when a few people in a class use communication supports and others speak verbally. Molly said she would begin by making agreements with the group. Someone like Dan may take much longer to type an answer than others take to speak, so she asks ahead of time whether it's okay for the conversation to continue while he types.

[00:43:03] You're looking for an order in the conversation that gives everyone a chance to speak. Since each lesson also has cards, one staff member might support someone with the cards while another supports someone with the

board. If there are ten people in the class and Dan points to something, would you say it aloud or keep it visual? I would make sure people can see it, and I would say it aloud if he wants that. If it were private, I would not. We sometimes turn down the iPad's volume when the message is not to be shared. You can ask, "May I share this now?" On Zoom, voice output can be hard to hear or may pronounce something strangely, so I ask permission to clarify by reading it verbatim. I don't put words in anyone's mouth or expand on what they said.

[00:44:51] Anything else? Any questions for Dan or I about anything else that we do? You can get our contact information. I think when the slides are sent out, we'll make sure that's on there also. Dan also has a blog and a Facebook page.

Anatomy, images, and board design [00:45:10]

[00:45:13] Someone asked whether the cards include sexual anatomy. Yes—they also include sexual acts and are very detailed. I was curious whether the question meant, "Finally, someone is including this," or whether there was concern about boards that depict a penis or similar anatomy. The participant said there was no concern: "I teach about sex. I think that's great. I had a client who was nonspeaking, but because of the pandemic I'm not going to see him for a long time." We spent a lot of time making sure the graphics were not childish. Some SymbolStix or Boardmaker images are hard to understand. Some of our images look like emojis, because everyone uses those; others are depictions. We also include the words. Part of presuming competence is believing people may be able to read even if they can't prove it. If nothing else, you're supporting literacy while using the board.

[00:46:52] And some of the boxes don't have images because we could not figure out a way to adequately display what the thing is. So if you come across something that is blank and you have an idea, please tell us because we, I don't know, four of us were trying to figure out some of them and could not. So, yeah. Can you give examples of some of the ones that were hard to find? Yeah, let me pull out some of these ones. I was thinking, like something like trust. It was fun. Like how do you graphically represent trust? So it is those sorts of words, I think, more than anything. Some examples of some anatomy. These ones are clips from the actual curriculum also, the drawings.

[00:47:50] And then you'll see some actual photos of, it's hard for me to read backwards. Oh, like friends and different types of relationships also being depicted that way. And then let me find. I'm looking at them. Yeah, yeah. Respect and disrespect. That's challenging. If you have ideas, we love that. Responsibility is also one. So anyone that is here that's sort of like, you know, we didn't want to confuse the issue any further by putting something that was unclear. So, and if your students have feedback too, like what would make sense there, please let us know. Okay. See, it's almost one o'clock my time.

[00:48:47] Any other questions for us?

COVID-19 and device hygiene [00:48:50]

[00:48:50] Annie. Sorry, I have one more question. If someone uses a type of augmentative communication with COVID-19 and everything that's going on, would it be appropriate to put on gloves? If you're going to touch their

personal communication device, because you don't want to transfer germs to them or anything, or would that seem to. I mean, if I had a device like that, I hate handing my phone over to cashiers when you have like a coupon on it. I'm like, oh, you're touching my phone. I would assume that someone with a communication device might feel the same way.

[00:49:28] So, would it be good to put on gloves during the COVID craziness or to offer that to them and say, would you like for me to wear gloves or give it a wipe before I touch or anything like that? Yeah, I would offer. And then also, you know, it's kind of explain why that might be a good idea. And then also make sure it's the right choice for you and then whoever else you're supporting in your organization.

[00:49:53] Our organization usually supports about a hundred people one-to-one in their communities; we don't have a center. We were deemed essential, so we continued supporting communication. Dan and I are like family, so we weren't taking precautions with each other. Staff entering people's homes used the precautions that were right for each person and family. It was a negotiation about what made sense. And in those cases, this is different than having a group class. They are also only seeing that one person. So it's a little less risky than, you know, hey, I'm a staff person and I have five clients. Great.

Closing discussion [00:50:50]

[00:50:50] Last words of wisdom. Questions. I'm excited when you all get to use these to hear how it goes. Give us your feedback. You're welcome, Izzy. Dan, do you have any last words of wisdom for us about supporting someone who is nonspeaking or uses AAC? Now you're going to hear me say,

"Put your leg down," because I also find posture can be helpful. [Pause while Dan types.]

[00:52:27] Dan (via AAC device): "I am so pleased that others will have access." Thank you. [Applause.] Well, wonderful. It was nice to meet you all. Thank you for coming, and please reach out if you need anything. Thanks, Molly. Thanks, Dan. Everyone, let us know how it goes and send any suggestions. We can always make edits and improve it. Thank you all.