Q&A

What is AAC? Anything that is used to enhance a person’s speech can be considered AAC. We all use a form of AAC when we gesture, use facial expressions, or use visual aids to explain something. People with impaired speech can use AAC to create messages that others will understand while they work on regaining their ability to speak.

What kinds of AAC can I use with my loved one who has TBI? Many options, from simple yes/no systems to high-tech computerized speech generating devices, are available. The AAC team will help you find the right fit based on the technical skills and preferences of you and your loved one with TBI.

How do you communicate with AAC? Some solutions include extensive partner support while others can be used more independently. It depends on the current communication status and goals of your loved one.

When should we start using AAC? As soon as possible! The first step is completing a comprehensive assessment from an AAC team.

How do I learn more? Make an appointment with a speech-language pathologist at the hospital or rehab center and check out the resources on the back of this brochure.

Funding & Other Resources

Article: Traumatic Brain Injury and AAC: Supporting Communication Through Recovery
www.asha.org (search for “TBI and AAC”)

Websites:
https://www.isaac-online.org
http://www.dynavoxtech.com/conditions/other/traumatic-brain-injury/
http://aacfundinghelp.com
http://whenseanspeaks.com/

Book: Characteristics of Effective Communication Partners in Supporting Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury, Jerry Hoepner, ProQuest 2013

UNM Speech-Language-Hearing Center
1700 Lomas Blvd. NE, Suite 1300
Albuquerque, NM 87131
shs.unm.edu

Helping People with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Communicate:
Building Successful Partnerships

A practical resource for families & friends

Information about Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) during recovery and rehabilitation

Brochure constructed by Moira Ellis
Communication Support During TBI Recovery

• Traumatic Brain Injury can cause a wide variety of cognitive (mental) and motoric (physical) deficits that impact memory, language, comprehension, behavior, and movement.

• Recovery and rehabilitation time can vary dramatically from person to person.

• It is important for individuals with TBI to be active participants in their recovery.

• Communication is an essential element of participation.

• You can help your loved one with TBI in many ways, including allowing adequate time for responses, providing context, and introducing topics.

• Communicators use multimodal communication, which may consist of a combination of speech, gestures, eye movements, and pictorial symbols to create a complete and cohesive message.

• People who use AAC need to take advantage of cognitive and motoric skills that are intact and find solutions using multiple modes of communication.

• People with TBI need to communicate their basic needs and wants, share information and personal stories, maintain relationships, and participate in daily tasks such as greeting people.

• Obtain a comprehensive AAC assessment to see if your loved one might benefit from using additional forms of communication. Contact a speech-language pathologist today!