



*Augmentative and Alternative
Communication*

*The purpose of
the training is
to...*

- *Understand how to identify augmented and alternative communication (AAC) processes.*
- *Understand that AACs are a type of “verbal behavior”*
- *Teach the pros and cons of using AACs*
- *Understand the importance of AACs*
- *Understand how AACs are used.*
- *Learn how to offer choices to expand on AACs*
- *Learn how to differentiate between AAC modalities*
- *Learn about shaping and positive reinforcement strategies to strengthen the communicative response*

What is meant by Augmented Alternative Communications?

Augmentative means to add to someone's speech.

Alternative means to be used instead of speech.

Options to use include "No-tech" or "Low-tech" methods such as;

gestures and facial expressions, writing, drawing, spelling words by pointing to letters, making use of photos, pictures, or written words

Options also include "high-tech" methods such as;

Making use of an iPad or tablet to communicate or using a computer with a "voice," sometimes called a speech-generating device

Why is it so important to make use of AACs?

AACs can provide a means to allowing an individual to express their needs wants and desires with limited to no use of speech and language.

By allowing communicative access to an individual, this usually leads to decreases in inappropriate behavior

- Imagine if you were thirsty and wanted water, but couldn't talk to say so*
- Imagine if you were in pain or discomfort and were unable to express pain*

AACs improve the quality of life for the individual (and potentially their home staff/caregiver)

- Maladaptive behaviors can be stressful for, not only the individual, but for others who are present during the behavior. When an individual is getting their wants and needs met the occurrence of maladaptive behaviors tends to reduce greatly.*

What are some types of techniques used to assist with communication?

Mand- non verbal responses such as pointing to an item, picture/sign or making use of basic signing to gain access to preferred items or activities. This technique is typically used the most to establish rapport.

Tact- teaching or training an individual to pair alternative communications to the request an item or activity. Example: You would ask your client, "what is this?" while showing them the item and prompting if needed. Any effort to acknowledge the shown item is immediately reinforced. Responses could be in the form of pointing to the item, picture/sign or making use of basic signing.

Mand vs Tact

Mand- requested item or activity is the reinforcer. Example: banana is shown-banana is given as reinforcer.

Tact- the visual acts as a tool not the reinforcer itself. Reinforcer is given after a successful attempt at communication. Example: banana is shown in an image- actual banana is given as reinforcer.

What are some types of techniques used to assist with communication?

Intraverbals- this technique is a dialogue-based technique. Intraverbals teach responses to the spoken (or signed) words of others without repeating exactly what the other person just said. Intraverbals would be used best with individuals which are able to verbally communicate.

Example: Instructor can ask “how do you feel” responder would say “happy”. Instructor can say “the itsy bitsy...” responder would say “spider”.

Echoics- technique used to increase the success of the vocal-verbal response. An echoic is a verbal operant that happens when a person repeats exactly what was just said by the first speaker. In other words, echoics are verbal imitation. This technique is typically used by Speech and Language Pathologists. “Echoics are used to name the item or define the dialog however we typically do not reinforce the echo. When the learner is able to repeat the expected vocal response, then the instructor can reinforce.

Example: Teacher says “good morning” students respond with “good morning.”

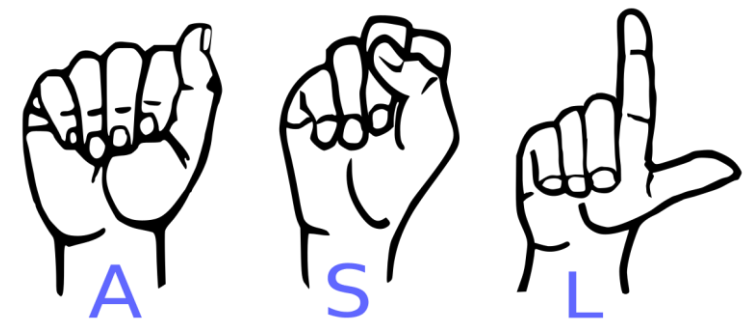
Verbal techniques requiring a learned response

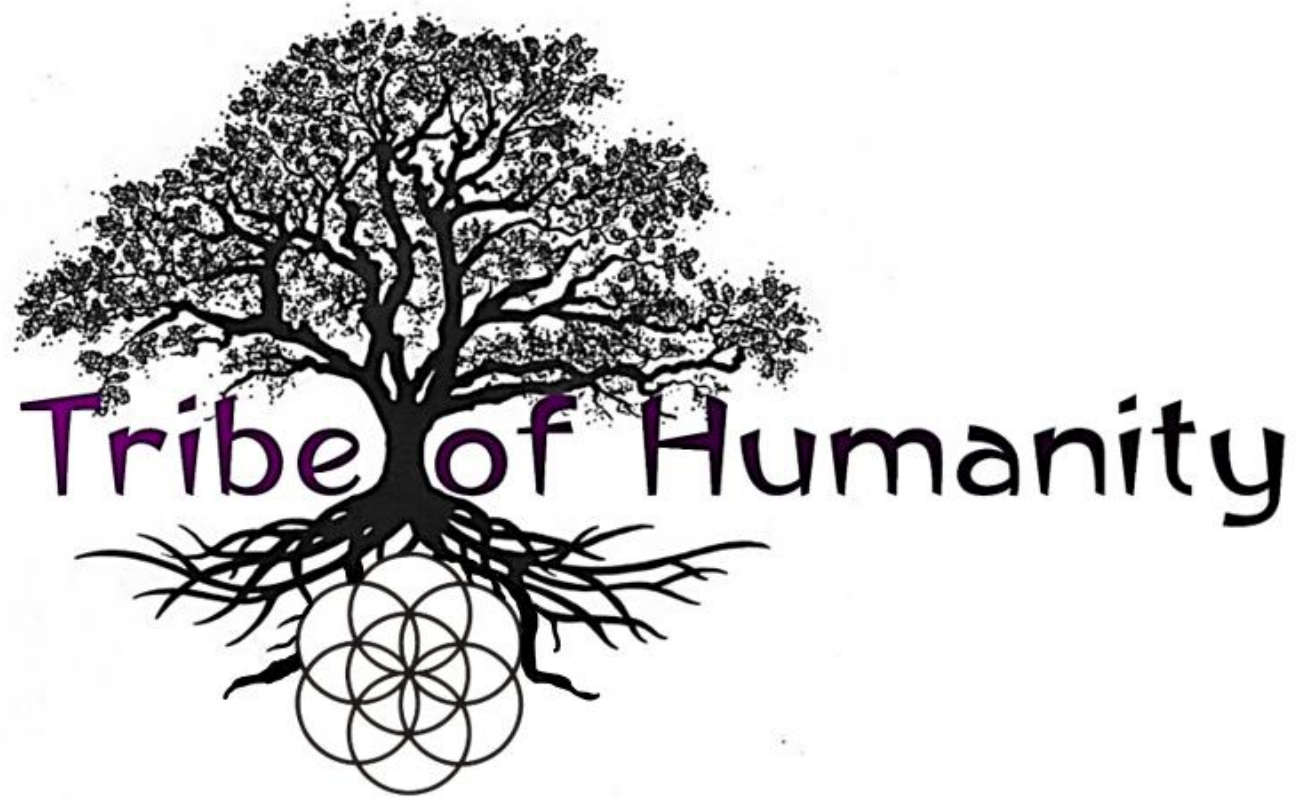
1. **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**- an alternative communication method. The learner is taught to use pictures to communicate to another party. Typically picture cards or word cards are exchanged to assist with communication.

2. **American Sign Language (ASL)**- an alternative communication method. The learner is taught to use sign to communicate.

3. **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Devices**- an alternative communication method. The Learner is taught how to use a technological device to assist with communication.

4. **Vocal-Verbal** not an alternative communication method. The learner is taught to use spoken words when engaging in communication.





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