Assistive Technology Discussion Tool

This is a tool designed to help ISP teams consider what assistive technology (AT) may be helpful for a person, make a plan to acquire and implement the AT, and evaluate its effectiveness.

Bobby has a **mechanical anti-overflow system** that shuts off the faucets on his **bathtub.** Now he never overflows the tub – even if he gets distracted with a video game. He can now bathe in privacy without his support provider.

Sue Ann chose a **call button pendant** that she wears at night so she can summon her provider if she falls. She feels a lot safer and more confident about getting up to during the night if she needs to now.

Blanca uses a **medication dosing and reminder device** so that she can take her medications independently. It took some planning and support in the beginning, but now the responsibility is completely hers and she says she feels more capable and empowered than ever.

Alex uses his tablet as a **communication device**. His team consulted with a speech therapist to provide technical assistance and training. Now all of Alex's DSPs support him consistently and his expressive communication skills have skyrocketed!

WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

"Assistive Technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible."

— **ati.gmu.edu/what_ati.cfm**

Prepared by Oregon Technical Assistance Corporation
www.OregonISP.org/AT

What does Assistive Technology look like?

Adaptive switches

Emergency summoning devices

Smartphones, tablets, and apps

Object-based communication device

Picture-based communication device

Support with everyday tasks

Medication reminders

Medication dispensers

Home health support & data tracking solutions

Community safety (GPS)

Hygiene support

BROWSE KEYWORDS

AAC adaptive assessment bathroom bluetooth choices communication community computer definitions device education emergency equipment expressive go talk health housekeeping hygiene independent information ipad iphone/ipod touch keyless entry leisure lock medication money music reminders remote monitoring research resource resources routine safety schedules sensor supervision switches telehealth timer Toilet video Wireless

Assistive Technology takes many different shapes, sizes, and isn't always "high-tech."

Visit www.OregonISP.org/AT to browse a range of devices.

Step 1: Identify Needs

Ask what tasks or activities the person wants to do that, with AT, would require less assistance or allow the person to be more independent. Use questions like these to help the team clearly identify the need.

Discussion Questions

- What activity requires personal assistance? What strategies or accommodations are currently in place? What is working or not working about it?

- What is highly motivating to the person? Where would the person like to have more control in his or her life? If the person has limited communication, what would he or she like to be able to ask for or say?

- Are there underlying issues the team should keep in mind, such as sensory issues or fears?

- Have areas of the ISP been of concern in the past? Are there areas where progress on goals has not been made?

- Does the team need additional help to assess the person's need for AT (i.e. referral for professional services)?

- Is the intent to reduce the duties of or replace a staff person/support provider with AT?

- Does the person use any AT in another setting such as school, work, or home?

- How might the use of AT help the person perform desired task(s) or activities more easily, efficiently, or successfully with less personal assistance?

Bobby

Bobby is 28 years old. He lives in his own apartment in a supported living program and has a care provider who drops by once a day to help him with his chores and remind him to do various tasks. His team asked him questions about areas where he would like to have more independence.

Bobby said he would rather not have his care provider assist him with bathing. Bobby has overflowed his bathtub in the past which caused costly damage. During a discussion facilitated by the questions above, His team learned that, while Bobby is afraid he will overflow the tub, he would really like more privacy when bathing.

Bobby, 28
Supported Living Program

Wants less staff presence while bathing

Who is the "team?"

Teams look different depending on the person's preferences and chosen services.

Bobby, 28
Lives in a Supported Living Program

- Bobby
- His Supported Living provider
- His CDDP Services Coordinator

- Sue Ann
- Her Foster Provider
- Her employment provider
- Her CDDP Services Coordinator

Sue Ann, 57
Lives in an Adult Foster Home

Blanca, 32
Lives in an apartment above her parents' home

- Blanca
- Her parents
- Her Personal Agent

- Alex
- His guardian
- His residential provider
- His CDDP Services Coordinator

Alex, 16
Lives in a group home with three housemates

Step 2: Explore Options

Assign someone to research AT that will fit the person's needs. What resources will they explore? By when? If the team is already considering one specific AT, decide if any additional AT options should be explored.

Strategies for finding an AT solution

- Consider what services are available to help explore options (e.g. Occupational Therapy (OT), technical assistance programs, lending libraries, loan/rental programs).

- Ask around:
  ⇒ Check with therapists, family members, people at school or work, and others who know the person for recommendations and resources.
  ⇒ Look for examples of where AT may have been used in similar situations.
  ⇒ Ask friends or others you know who use some form of AT successfully for advice.
  ⇒ Ask your tech-savvy friends.

- Don't forget low-tech environmental solutions. Involve the person, family, and supports in brainstorming. Think creatively!

- Go to hardware or electronics stores. Describe the situation to sales clerks and see what ideas they have. You may get some creative, yet sensible suggestions from people not in "the field."

- Browse the web:
  ⇒ Search a keyword or question, such as Universal Design, accessibility, adaptive equipment, adaptive technology, and augmented communication—see what comes up.
  ⇒ Search social networking sites to find others with similar interests or expertise to share.

- Don't worry if you are new at this and feel lost. Start by taking one simple action and see where it takes you!

A searchable database of AT can be found at **www.OregonISP.org/AT**

Sue Ann

Sue Ann is 57 and lives in an adult foster home. She has good safety skills. However, she is unsteady on her feet, uses a walker, and has a slight risk of falling. Currently a staff person stays overnight to monitor Sue Ann in case she needs to get up for any reason. Her foster provider feels there may be a way to promote Sue Ann's safety with less dependence on a staff person while still providing her with access to help if she needs it. The foster provider researched some possible AT solutions and found a call button and remote alarm that Sue Ann likes.

Sue Ann, 57
Adult Foster Home

Wants to improve safety and independence at night

Step 3: Make a Decision

Decide whether or not to acquire the identified AT. Clearly define the desired outcome of the AT so that its effectiveness can be evaluated later. Document the team's rationale for acquiring the AT.

Discussion Questions

♦ How might the person's life change as a result of this AT? Does the person want the changes that the AT will create?

♦ Will this AT support the person to:
  ⇒ Have greater control over his or her own life?
  ⇒ Participate in and contribute more fully in activities in his or her home, school, work environment, or community?
  ⇒ Interact with others?
  ⇒ Access the same activities as people who do not have disabilities?

♦ What will the person accomplish by using this AT? Will the AT:
  ⇒ Meet an ADL or IADL need?
  ⇒ Improve the person's health, safety, or well-being?
  ⇒ Address a specific identified health or safety concern?
  ⇒ Decrease the amount of provider support needed?

♦ Will the purchase be cost effective in helping the person meet the desired outcome?
  ⇒ What services in the ISP will be reduced as a result of obtaining this AT?
  ⇒ How often will the person use or benefit from this AT?

⇒ What other alternatives have been considered?

⇒ Could modifications to the environment help the person complete the task or activity more independently?

⇒ Is this the least costly AT that will meet the need?

⇒ If not, why has the team chosen the higher cost option? What is the documented justification for this decision?

♦ What services will be added, permanently or temporarily, as a result of obtaining this AT?

♦ Are there additional costs to consider (e.g. for ongoing maintenance costs or usage fees, extended warranties or service plans, additional equipment needed for use, education or training, or modifications to the environment to allow for its use)?

♦ Are there behavior, medical, or safety factors that would impact the person's ability to successfully use this AT?

♦ Does the person have the capacity to use this particular AT successfully or will he or she need help to use it?

♦ What are the training requirements to implement the AT?

*Remember to clearly define the **desired outcome** of the AT!*

Blanca

Blanca receives brokerage services and works 30 hours a week at her community-based job. She is proud of her independent and active life. She has diabetes, but it is well-controlled with medication. It is important to Blanca to be responsible for taking her own medications at the right time. However, she often forgets to take them and needs support to organize her doses. Her personal agent, Dan, showed a medication dosing and reminder device to Blanca and her mother and they thought it would work well. They used the questions above to decide whether or not it would benefit Blanca to have one.

Blanca, 32
Lives in an apartment above her parents' home

Wants to acquire a medication reminder device

Describe the identified need:

Who will research AT options?_____ **By when?**_____

What AT will the person acquire?_____

Desired outcome of this AT:

Rationale:

Step 4: Obtain and Implement

Make a plan for how to obtain and support the person's use of the AT as well as how to monitor its effectiveness.

Obtaining the AT

Who will purchase this AT? Where? When?
- How will it be paid for?
  - ⇒ Consider resources such as health insurance, K plan, waiver, Voc. Rehab., school resources, grants.
- If funding is not currently available, what are the options?

Using the AT

What training will be needed in order to use this AT?
- What does the person need to learn in order to use the AT?
- What information do others need to implement the device?
- Is a referral for additional help needed?
- Who will provide training to the person? When?
- Who will provide training to the provider(s)/family/others? When?

What else is needed to implement this AT?
- How will the person use this AT? Describe what the usage of this AT will look like.
- Can the AT be accessed by the person independently? Does the environment need any modification to support use of this AT?
- Can the AT be used wherever the person goes? Where will it normally be located?
- Who will own the AT? If the person moves, will it go with the person?
- Is any equipment, such as a protective case, needed to help prevent damage to the AT?
- What will be required to maintain the AT in working order? Who is responsible for its maintenance?
- What measures are needed to minimize risks of loss or theft of the AT? What is the plan if it is lost or stolen?
- Does this AT restrict anyone's personal rights in any way? Is special consent or a variance needed?
- Does the ISP reflect services needed to support this AT in a way that is understood by all team members?

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the AT

Review the desired outcome of the AT. Describe what the person's life looks like now and how it will be different; define a baseline by which to monitor progress or changes.
- What method(s) will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the AT?
  - ⇒ What information can be observed and measured that will demonstrate progress toward goals?
  - ⇒ What data will be collected? Who will be responsible to collect data, where (in what environments), and how?
- How will progress be monitored over time?
- Are any other steps needed to monitor the use and/or the effectiveness of this AT?

Step 5: Evaluate Effectiveness

Evaluate how well the AT is working for the person in his or her life. Consider how the person's life is different now that the AT has been implemented. Identify what is working and what is not working and decide what additional action is needed.

Discussion Questions

♦ Review the data (e.g. progress notes, behavior tracking, ISP goal tracking). What does the data show?

♦ Is there other information to share about the effects of the AT (e.g. observed behaviors)?

♦ Is the AT being used as originally intended? Does it meet the desired outcome?

♦ Does usage vary depending on location, activity, people present, or time of day?

♦ Are all people who support the person using the AT consistently and as planned?

♦ What is working well?

♦ What is not working, and what further improvements or modifications are needed? Does the AT or support for its use need to change?

♦ Is further consultation needed regarding any issue identified in this evaluation phase?

Alex

Alex's team purchased software for his tablet that assists his expressive communication. His team agreed to evaluate the effectiveness of the software after it had been in use for about a month. With four direct support professionals on shift every day and two at night, Alex interacts with a lot of people in his home. When Alex's services coordinator initiated a team discussion using the questions above, the team learned that the DSPs working in the group home need improved written instructions to support Alex to use it in a consistent way.

Alex, 16
Lives in a group home with three housemates

Uses a tablet device to support his expressive communication.

NOTES

Acronyms Key	
ADL/IADL	Activities of Daily Living/Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
AT	Assistive Technology
CDDP	Community Developmental Disability Program
DSP	Direct Support Professional
ISP	The Individual Support Plan is built on information gathered from the perspective of the person, his/her family, guardian, or designated representative, and others directed by the person such as people who provide supports. These contributors to planning are referred to as the ISP team.

Assistive Technology Resources in Oregon

More resources and a searchable database of AT can be found at
www.OregonISP.org/AT

Access Technologies, Inc.
2225 Lancaster Drive NE
Salem, OR 97305
Voice/TTY: 1-800-677-7512
Voice/TTY: 503-361-1201
Fax: 503-370-4530
www.accesstechnologiesinc.org

Augment Oregon
www.augmentoregon.com

CATO (Coalition for Assistive Technology in Oregon)
P.O. Box 431
Winchester, OR 97495
Phone: 541-445-2047
www.educationtechpoints.org/about-us

Blanche Fischer Foundation
1509 SW Sunset Blvd. Suite 1B
Portland, OR 97239
Phone: 503-246-4941
Fax: 503-246-4941
www.bff.org

OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital
700 SW Campus Drive, 7th floor
Portland, OR 97239
Phone: 503-346-0640 or 877-346-0640
www.ohsu.edu/xd/health/services/doernbecher/programs-services/assistive-technology.cfm

Oregon Technology Access Program
1871 NE Stephens
Roseburg, OR 97470
Phone: 541-440-4791
Fax: 541-957-4808
www.otap-oregon.org/Pages/Default.aspx

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by

www.otac.org