



AceCentre
Challenging Communication

TalkingMats 

Ace Centre and Talking Mats

Readiness for AAC

Introduction

We believe that people should be involved in decisions about their communication and AAC. Ace Centre recognise that early conversations about AAC can be challenging. This resource aims to support these conversations and provide people with the time and space to think about whether they are 'ready' for AAC.

This resource was funded by **Ace Centre** and created collaboratively by Ace Centre and **Talking Mats** (www.talkingmats.com).

Talking Mats was developed at the University of Stirling and is an evidence-based communication framework. If you want to become an effective Talking Mats practitioner then please attend a Talking Mats foundation course.

This resource is provided for free to allow Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Teachers etc. to facilitate a discussion about 'Readiness for AAC' with their clients. The right time for this discussion will vary from person to person but examples include: when AAC is first being considered, when provision of AAC via local funding is being considered, when referral to a regional hub for Specialised AAC service is being considered.

This is a scripted Talking Mat – the script, symbols and a demo video are provided ([youtube.com/user/acecentre](https://www.youtube.com/user/acecentre)). Before your Talking Mats session get ready by cutting out your symbols and deciding on your top scale. Choose a top scale that is appropriate for the individual, for example OK/Not OK or Happy/Not Happy. Choose a mid-point if appropriate, such as 'in the middle' or 'maybe'. It is a good idea to write your top scale on the symbols to help you remember it as you go along.

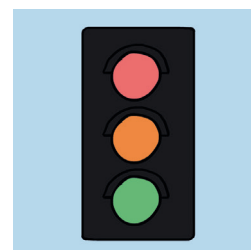
A free resource from the charity AceCentre.org.uk

Script for the discussion

Topic

Readiness for AAC:

- Introduce the topic of discussion: 'Readiness for AAC'.
- Start by defining AAC – explain that this stands for Alternative and Augmentative Communication. i.e. everything other than speech; that it includes many different types of communication such as gesture, signing, communication books, alphabet charts, ipads and computers.
- Explain that the Talking Mat is to support a conversation about how the individual feels about AAC and that this can be used to provide appropriate information or inform appropriate referrals.
- Introduce the top scale.

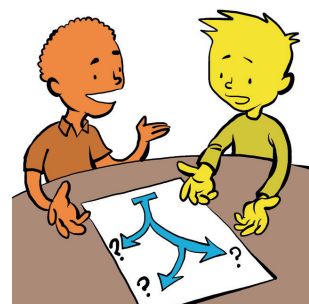


Now use the Talking Mats to ask the following questions. Saying the explanations (in italics) is optional:

“How do you feel about getting some information about AAC?”

01

(e.g. contact details for AAC charities and companies, chatting to other people who use AAC, learning about different systems e.g. by watching videos of others using them).



“How do you feel about exploring what AAC options are available?”

02

(e.g. discussing what options might be possible, talking to professionals about these, seeing product demonstrations).



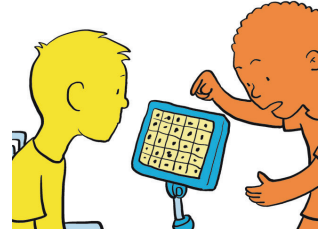
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“How do you feel about trying out some AAC systems?”

03

(e.g. trying out a communication book, trying a computer with voice output, having a go at using different body parts such as your eyes or your head to use a computer).



“How do you feel about learning to use a new AAC system?”

04

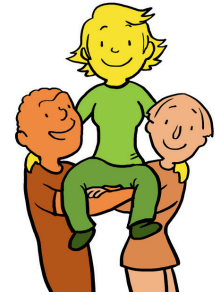
(e.g. a communication book, a computer with voice output).



“How do you feel about the support you have to help you with AAC?”

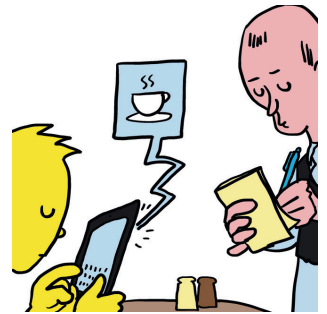
05

(e.g. emotional support; practical support - such as charging a computer, turning the pages of a communication book).



“How do you feel about using AAC in your daily life?”

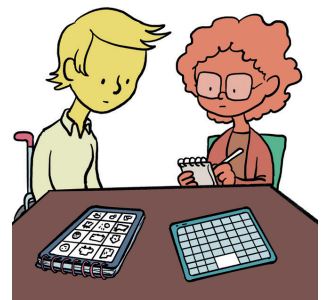
06



Explain: “Some people have an AAC Assessment. This is when you meet with professionals to look at AAC options and choose which one might be right for you.”

07

“How do you feel about having an AAC assessment?”



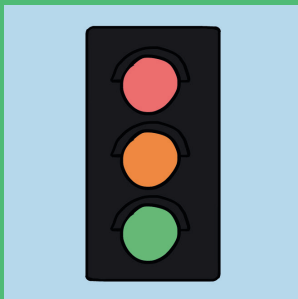
Conclusion

- Now summarise what the person has told you
- Ask them if there is anything they would like to add or change
- Discuss an action plan together / talk about next steps e.g. bringing some alphabet charts to look at next time, arranging a product demonstration, referral to specialised AAC service.

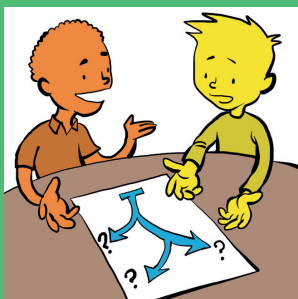
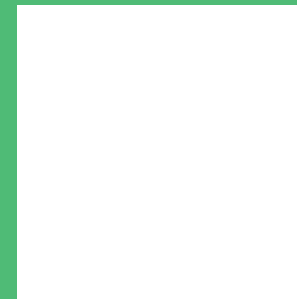
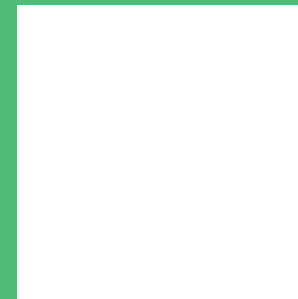
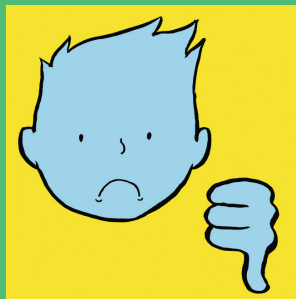
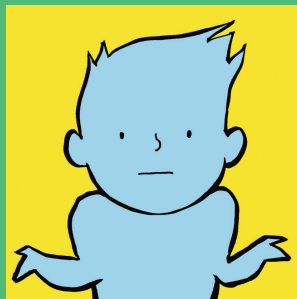
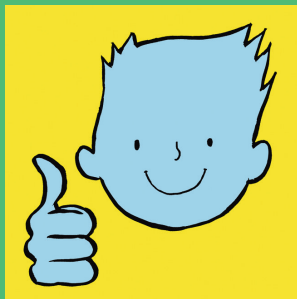
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NOTES

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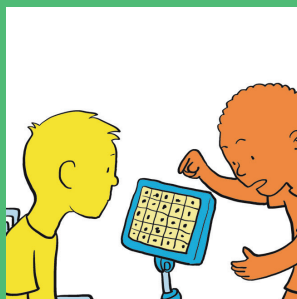
Readiness for AAC



Information about AAC



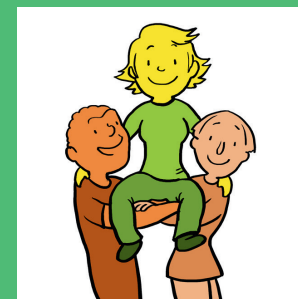
AAC options available



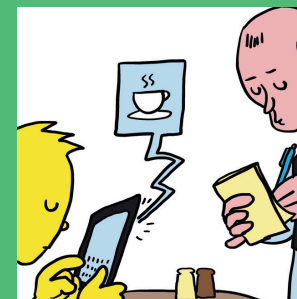
Trying out AAC



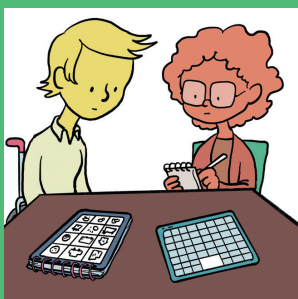
Learning something new



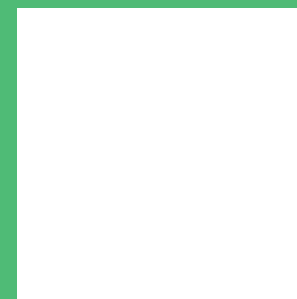
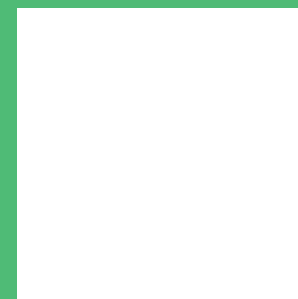
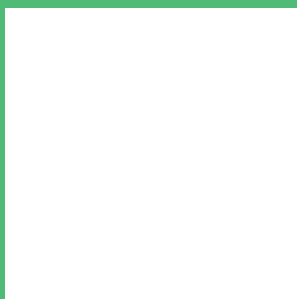
Support



Using AAC in daily life



Assessment



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AceCentre

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