Making Communication Happen: The Basics – Planning and Developing ISA Communication Based Support Plans and Outcomes

February 20, 2019

What will be discussed

- How can we use the ISA process to support the person's use of current and future communication systems

- What is the process for developing meaningful communication outcomes for a person?

- What supports and plans need to be put in place to ensure that outcomes are met?

"Communication is a skill that you can learn. It's like riding a bicycle or typing. If you're willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life." – Brian Tracy

The most important principles for supporting people to communicate have little to do with equipment or elaborate instructional techniques.

They are the attitudes and skills of the people they are talking with: their communication partners.

The Right to Communicate

"Every person, regardless of the severity of his/her disabilities has the right and the ability to communicate with others, express everyday preferences, and exercise at least some control over his or her daily life. Each individual, therefore, should be given the chance, training, technology, respect and encouragement to do so." -- Rosemary Crossley, Empowering Communication Aid Users, 1999

Communication Partner Activity

Participants will pair up. One person will receive a slip of paper with communication instructions. Read your message and do not tell your partner what it is!!!

For the next few minutes do your best to determine the message being passed.

Discussion: What did it feel like for both parties?

Tracy's Thoughts on Communication:

The Who and What question: Who do I communicate with and what do I talk about?
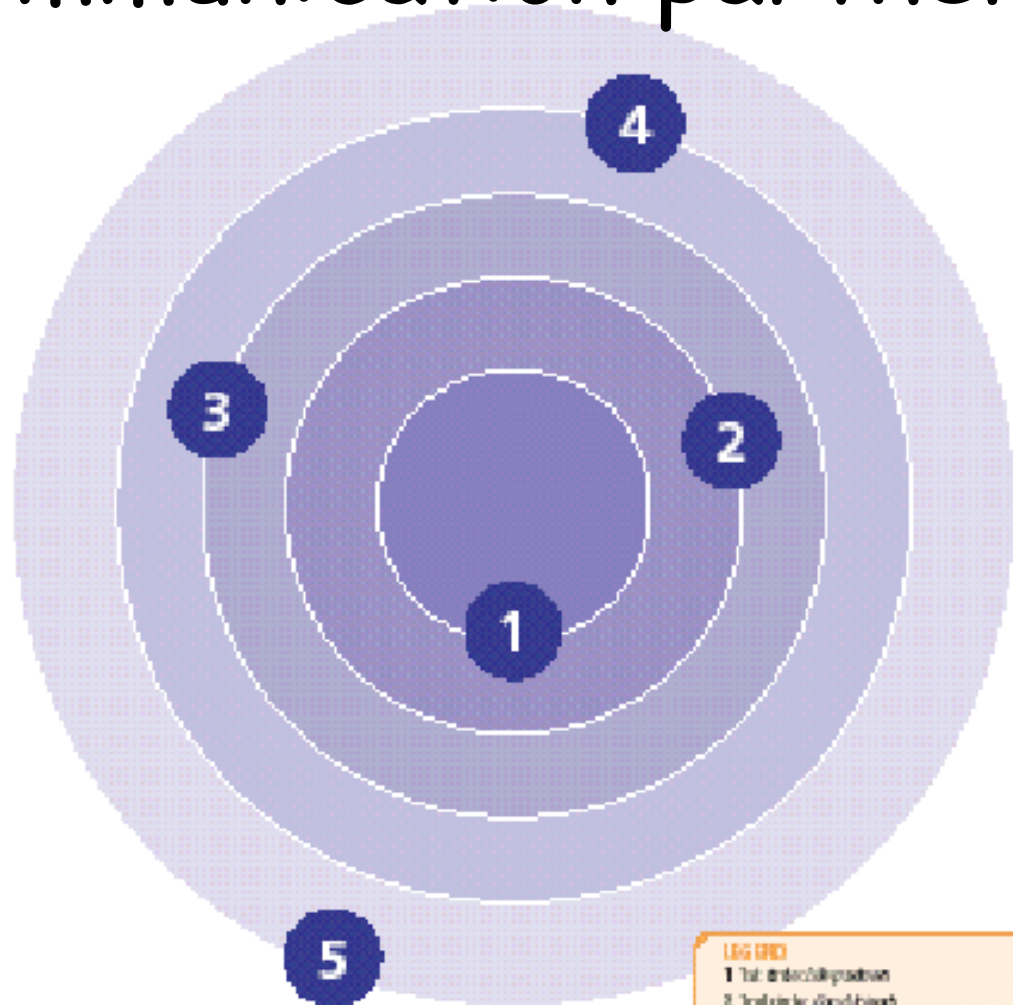
Circles of communication partners

1. Life Partners

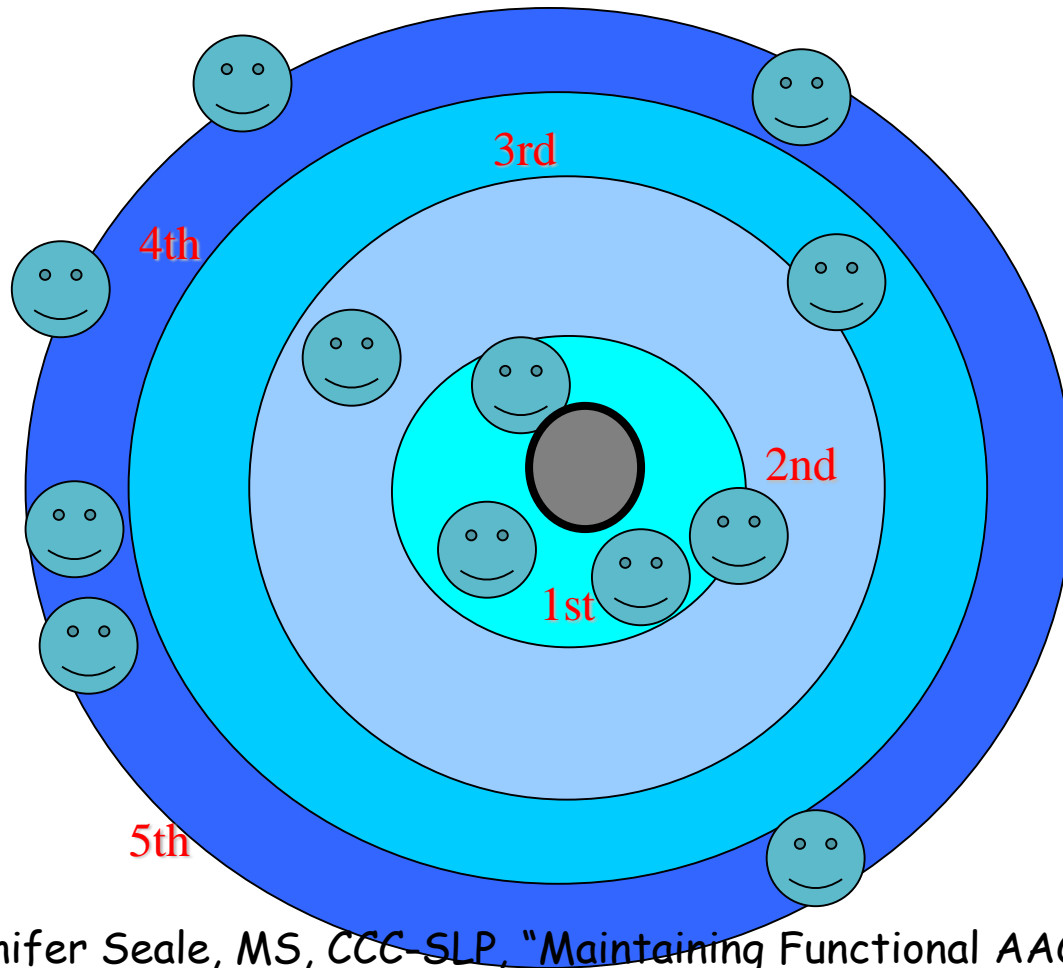2. Close friends/ relatives

3. Acquaintances

4. Paid Workers

5. Unfamiliar Partners
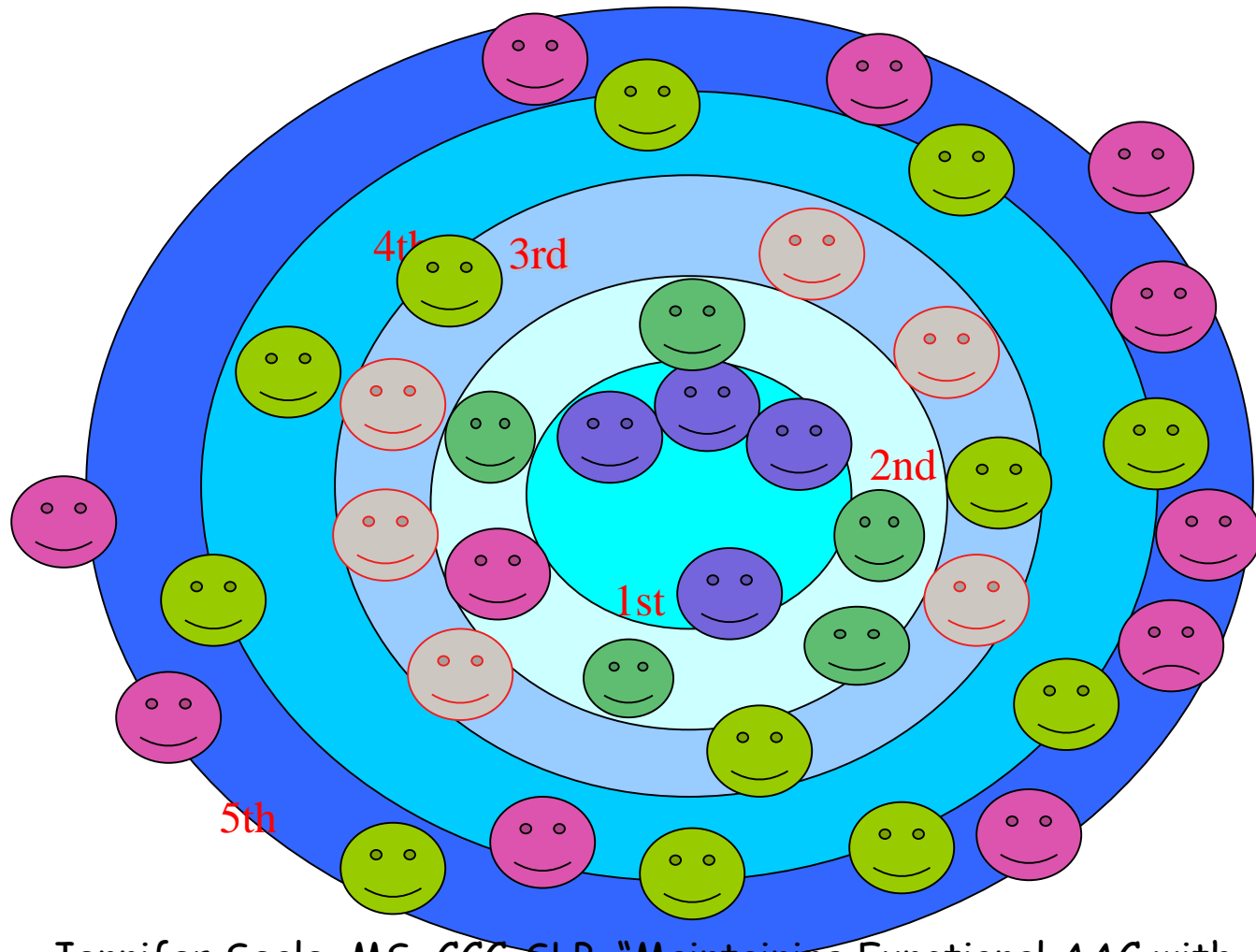

Blackstone adapted from Forest, Snow. Et al.

Emerging Communicators
(unbalanced & less full circles)

Jennifer Seale, MS, CCC-SLP, "Maintaining Functional AAC with Transitions" July 24, 2009 Pennsylvania Transition Conference

Independent Communicators
(full and balanced circles)

Jennifer Seale, MS, CCC-SLP, "Maintaining Functional AAC with Transitions" July 24, 2009 Pennsylvania Transition Conference

Within any activity, people will be communicating for different purposes:

- **Expression of needs/wants**

- **Sharing information**

- **Social Closeness** – to establish, maintain and/or develop personal relationships

- **Social Etiquette** – to conform to social conventions of politeness, e.g. greetings

How the purposes of communication change across the life span

Life Phases   *Types of Interaction*

	WANTS/ NEEDS	INFORMATION TRANSFER	SOCIAL CLOSENESS	SOCIAL ETIQUETTE
Infancy	H	L	H	L
Elementary	M	M	H	M
College	L	H	H	H
Middle	L	H	M-H	H
Retirement	L	M	H	H
Elderly	M-H	L	H	M-H

Code: **H**= high interest   **M** = moderate interest   **L**= low interest

From: Light, J. (1988). Interaction involving individuals using AAC systems. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 4, 76

What kind of communication happens at a family and friend dinner?

A framework for thinking about outcomes for communication –
The Ecological Approach

Using an Ecological Approach Involves:

- Looking at how communication happens within the context of **everyday activities and routines** that a person is already or will be involved in and looks at the degree to which the use of their communication system enables them to participate in these activities and routines.

- Focusing intervention on increasing the person's **social interaction, participation and independence** in these activities and routines.

Communication Tools

- Communication Dictionary

- Communication Checklist

- Communication Plan

COMMUNICATION DICTIONARY

- Facilitates common interpretations among Communication Partners
- Helps new partners become familiar with individual communication
- Helps identify areas for further instruction
- Provides documentation of change in communication skills

BEHAVIOR	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT WE DO

John's Communication Dictionary
Sample

- Take a look at the case study in your packet. Describe 3-5 ways John communicates

- View & Discussion about John's Communication Dictionary (Word Doc).

Communication Checklist

The purpose of a checklist is to assist an individual and their team with identifying specific needs for communication so that an appropriate plan can be developed within their ISA to meet these needs.

It contains critical information to be collected or updated <u>as needed</u> by the service coordinator with assistance from the person, team members, and/or communication resources.

View John's Checklist

What is a communication plan?

- Provides a description of the different ways a person communicates across various settings

- For communication partners, provides information on how to support a person to communicate, e.g. strategies

- Provides information about the use of equipment, aids and devices

Communication plans and the ISA

- Is an independent document that is not necessarily tied to a outcome/goal
- There may need to be a communication plan to ensure that a person's communication continues to be supported well
- Should be considered as critical background information like medical, behavioral, etc. information
- Refer to Example (John Simpson)

To review, things to consider when developing communication outcomes:

- Should relate meaningfully to a person's life.

- Helpful to think in terms of increasing independence, participation, social interaction.

- Helpful to think in terms of the people, places, activities, etc. that a person is involved with (ecological approach).

How to decide what specific skills to focus on as part of the outcome

- Often is more beneficial to start with a skill that the person already has but does "some of the time".

- Increase the use of this skill across settings, people, etc. **– generalization**

- Look at the person initiating the skill without prompting so that they can interact independently with others

How to decide what skills to focus on as part of the outcome

- It is possible that you may be working with the person on using more than one mode of communication within a specific situation –

  – I might greet someone with a hand wave

  – I might ask them a "how are you" question on my communication device

  – I might show them some pictures of my vacation to share information

Sample Situations & Outcomes/Goals:

Work: To communicate more effectively with co-workers (greet people, initiate a conversation at work, consult with employer).

Home: To increase ability to have conversations during family social events

Community Settings: To increase ability to communicate clearly with unfamiliar people.

Decision-making Situations: To develop a reliable way to say, "NO" when presented with options that may not be desired.

Social Situations: To have meaningful conversations and plan a date with family/friends.

ISA SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- Description of prompts/cues that will assist a person in communicating
- Identify communication aids and how the person will use them
- Setting up the environment to make communication easier for the person
- Have strategies described in detail so that partners know exactly what to do

- Learning how to use a communication system, e.g. electronic device, communication book or a certain number of signs is not an outcome as much as it is a step along the way or a means to an end

MEASURING PROGRESS

- Can be written in terms of specific skills that the person is able to do

- Example:
  - "When Joe comes to work in the morning, he will independently greet people"
  - "When Joe needs help, he will independently ask for it from a co-worker".

Communication Outcomes Form

COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES/GOALS
AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES FORM

Name:

Date:

Person(s) Responsible for this Outcome:

Communication Outcome: (ISA Question: *What do you expect to be different as a result of supports?*)

Support Strategies: (ISA Question: *What are the supports you expect from support people? What will support people do to help you or teach you the strategy?*)

Indicators: (ISA Question: *How will you and others know when your expectations are being met?*)

Information: (ISA Questions: *What information needs to be gathered, and how often, so you know supports are working? How is this documented? Who is responsible for doing this?*)

Communication Outcome/Goals & Support Strategies Form

Name: John Simpson   **Date:** Feb. 20, 2019

Person(s) Responsible for this Outcome: Rachel Johnson (Service Coordinator), Hilary Spencer (Community Support Staff)

Communication Outcome: (ISA Question: *What do you expect to be different as a result of receiving supports? These outcomes must be clearly stated and measurable.*)

Outcome 1: John will learn to label "in the moment" feelings using visual aids/supports and will work towards more positive and effective ways of expressing himself.

Support Strategies: (*What do service coordinators, workers, and others need to do to help you reach your outcomes? Describe what support people do to support you, i.e. when, where and how they support you*)

Support Strategies:

- Assure John has access to visual aids that will help him identify what he is feeling in a given moment. Teach John to point to the emotional icon/word he is feeling if he is not able to use his language to do so. In the beginning support people will need to present him with the visual aid and may need to give him some verbal prompts to make a choice about what emotion he may be feeling. This may involve some positive encouragement from the support person.

- Through practice and repetition work to make John to feel comfortable identifying his emotions and begin to initiate this without prompts. As much as possible, John should also be included in the development of the communication aid (finding the icons to represent the emotions, etc.)

- Help John to learn and practice relaxation techniques / sensory integration before, or possibly after, he identifies and processes about how he is feeling. John sometimes needs supportive words / encouragement from support people when he is having a hard time.

- Use discussions / role playing to resolve difficult social situations and to help John appreciate effective means of expressing frustration as opposed to violence.

- Use Modeling / Social Scripting as tools to help John practice coping with frustration and to work through problems and disagreements.

- The service coordinator and support staff should educate Learning Network teachers about John's outcome. Try to create consistency for John.

- John's team will meet once a month may to brainstorm about how to best support John and his communication. Refer to communication plan & communication dictionary for additional information.

Tracking: (ISA Question #5: *What kind of information should be gathered and how often should information be collected on each of your outcomes to tell if you are making progress? Who is responsible for collecting the information?*)

Outcome 1 Tracking: *The desired outcome is:* John will learn to label "in the moment" feelings using visual aids/supports and will work towards more positive and effective ways of expressing himself.

John's support staff will write anecdotal notes detailing his progress towards expressing himself in positive and effective ways and name the tools or strategies used to do so. Support staff will document the episodes when John is successful in communicating his frustration using the communication strategies developed for this outcome. The service coordinator will collect and review the anecdotal notes, summarize them, and report the progress in a monthly progress note to measure John's successes labeling his feelings with visual aids and supports.

<u>For More Information:</u>

- **VT Agency of Human Services**

http://www.vt.gov

Click Health & Human Services
Click Technology & Communication

- **VT Communication Task Force**

https://ddsd.vermont.gov/boards-committees/vt-communication-task-force