

The P.A.S.S Approach 1500
Speakers: Jackie Kruzie and Trevor

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>> JACKIE KRUZIE: Hello. My name is Jackie. Hi, my name is Jackie and I'm going to be talking about the P.A.S.S approach. First off me introduce myself, I am Jackie Kruzie. I am a librarian, an author, and I'm a special needs mom. This is my daughter, Gracie, she is the inspiration behind the P.A.S.S approach. She is the reason that I created it. So Gracie was diagnosed with autism when she was three and she is completely not verbal. Her only form of communication is the little voice that you just heard. She has an iPad, exactly like this one. Not this one, I did not take it away from her to take it away from her to come here today. But she has an iPad exactly like this one that she carries around with her everywhere. It actually has a strap and she keeps it around her neck, has this big case so she doesn't break it, and she is able to communicate solely though her device.

This device is called augmentative and alternative communication. So that is ACC - sorry, I can't get my AAC, augmentative and alternative communication. And this is what it looks like. So when she's looking at a screen, it looks similar to this. It has pictures, it has words that way for those who are younger they can see the icons, if they are too young to read. So when she first started using her iPad. So we would take her to speech therapy, which essentially was teaching her how to use this iPad. It was pretty reli - or relevant at the very beginning that she was probably not going to be able to communicate in the same way you and I do. And so, speech therapy was teaching her how to use the app on this iPad. And so, a lot of the pictures helped her before she was able to read.

So over four million people across the United States use AAC. In fact, you guys use AAC, if you've ever texted an emoji to a friend? That's a form of AAC communication. So everyone uses it in some form or another. But about four million people across the US use it as their sole means of communication. And

so that's called, when they use an iPad is called a generating tech device, so a speech generating tech device. We call it at our house, we call it a talker. So, for the purpose of this presentation, I'm just going to refer to it as a talker. I can't guarantee that everyone calls it that, but that's what we call it at our house. It was just a simple way to say, "Go get your talker," instead of "Go get your speech generating tech device," you know. So for the purpose of this presentation, we are going to call it a talker.

So what is the P.A.S.S approach? It's just a four-step method to speaking with somebody who's AAC to make them feel comfortable and to make you feel comfortable. Because I mean, let's face it when somebody doesn't abide by the social contract, you know what I mean? We all get a little awkward if I said, "Hey, how are you?" And you said, "Good, I'm fine." Great, we both applied to social contract. We're good, we can move on. If I ask you how you're doing and you're like, "Not good. I just got kicked out of my apartment and you know what, my dog died last week." Suddenly, I'm like I'm like, "Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that," and while my words may be comforting, my tone is off my body language may be off. We have not abided by that social contract. Well, anyone who uses an AAC device to communicate is not abiding by the social contract that we are comfortable with. And so, we have to become comfortable talking with them. And the more comfortable we are, the more comfortable they will be. Because imagine if every time you spoke to somebody, they got uncomfortable. You wouldn't want to speak to very many people. So as librarians, of course, we promote open access to everyone. Open access to information, that includes anyone who may not abide by our same social contract. We still want to make sure that they get the same access to information that everybody else does. And that is our job to do. So we want to make them comfortable speaking to us, we want to put them at ease, and we can do that by having patience, paying attention, our speech and support. And we're going to go through each of these in a little bit more detail.

So with patience, even with practice everyday use, speaking with an AAC device is not a fast conversation. So I'm going to demonstrate that for you. I'm going to pretend I'm in a library setting, my daughter loves dinosaurs, so I'm going to ask for a book. "Hello. I want... dinosaur... book." "I want dinosaur book." So even that simple sentence, four words long, took me a strange amount of time. I'm sure some of you felt a little bit uncomfortable. You weren't sure how long I was going to take. You weren't sure what I was trying to say. I'm sure I put you

not at ease, it was a little bit awkward. And this was a relatively simple and easy request. You may also have noticed that every single button I pushed said a word out loud. So, you were able to hear very statically 'What'... 'I'... 'Was'... 'Saying'. And if somebody spoke like that, just as I did, again we would feel a little bit uncomfortable. So having patience because it can take approximately 45 seconds, that wasn't even 45 seconds that I took. Because I have been, honestly, I have been practicing that sentence for the past several days so that I could say it as fast as possible. So that didn't even take 45 seconds. But if somebody was requesting information that took more time, a more detailed request, it can take them 45 seconds or up to a minute, to ask that question.

Standing in front of somebody for an entire minute, waiting for them to finish their question takes patience. It takes patience, not only that as we just - as I just demonstrated each word actually said out loud what it was going to say before I pressed go and created the whole sentence. "I want dinosaur book." Now that is an app - that is an application that we have put into the into her app because being that she was so young and she couldn't read yet and she was relying on the pictures, we wanted her to be able to hear what she was saying before she said it out loud. So not every AAC device will do that but for those that do, be patient enough until they press go to say the whole sentence, before you respond. Because you may never be quite sure when their sentence is complete. So just having that patience, waiting, and ensuring that they have completed their thought before responding to them.

Now second is attention. I keep using this, not even think of doing anything. He's back there doing all that for me. So paying attention. I promise you, you will want to fill that lag time, that minute you want to do [clicking a pen on the table]. You are going to want to do anything to fill that awkwardness and lag time. And I'm going to ask you to please refrain. As difficult as that may sound because if you were speaking to somebody and they were looking at their watch, or they were kind of looking behind them, or they were [looking around] averting their attention, you would feel insignificant. And we want to make sure that that doesn't happen. So, a little pro tip when somebody is using their AAC device and they are constructing a sentence, try to find something about them that as soon as they are finished, as soon as she presses, "I want dinosaur book." Okay, and you what I love your shoes. Something simple. If you are looking at them, engaging with them, making some sort of connection with them, it going to put them at ease and you have

been able to fill that lag time in your mind by trying to do something that - complimenting them. Basically, you were paying attention. You were in that present moment.

The next thing, ask one question at a time. As librarians, we want to get information fast so she wants a dinosaur book. You may want to say fiction or nonfiction? Refrain, ask one question at a time. Would you like a fiction book? That way she can easily say, "Yes." That is so much easier than her trying to type out or find the word fiction and to answer your two-sided question. So one question at a time, and yes or no if possible. Again, I don't even know why I am trying to do that. So speak, this is for you, speak in your natural voice. It is very, very tempting for someone to say, "Oh, you want dinosaur books? Okay." My daughter is 10, almost 11, and in middle school. She does not want to be talked to like this. But she's adorable, you saw her and it is so tempting to want to speak to her that way. Or to want to speak to anyone that way. Or we may get a little bit louder. "Oh, you want dinosaur books?" They can hear you; they just can't respond to you.

We've even had situations where somebody speaks softer because they're trying not to draw any more attention to the conversation then is already happening. So speak in your natural voice, your normal tone, your normal volume. And make sure that you keep that eye contact with the person who is using the device. A lot of times an AAC user may have a caregiver with them. In the case of my daughter that's me, she's 10; she's not going anywhere by herself. And very often someone will look to me. They will want me to finish her thought, to get to the point faster. They will want me to answer if they ask a question like, "Oh, well, does she want fiction or nonfiction?" Ask her. So keep in mind that you need to pay attention to the person who is using the device and speak directly to them in a normal and natural tone of voice.

And the last one is support, and this is especially important for our librarians. That we have staff and supervisor support because just like we talked about interacting with somebody who uses AAC is going to take time, probably more time than interacting with any other patron. And everyone in the library needs to be aware that you may be busy for quite some time. So, whatever it was that you were doing, whether it was shelving books, whether it was, you know, cataloging computer work, answering an email; whatever that is, that is going to have to wait for just a little bit while you pay attention and help this patron. And I know to some people well I still have to

get my work done, of course you do. But remember, these are special needs individuals, which means they need special attention. And providing that special attention for a few extra moments in this case can be in a world of difference to that person. So as long as you are not on a time-sensitive project, take the time to address that patron and address their needs for as long as they need it. And as a staff or supervisor, if you notice that and you're like, you know what, I know that Erin is on a time-sensitive project. She doesn't have time. You know what? I know the P.A.S.S approach now, I'm going to go say "Erin, I got this," and I can now help and support her because I knew she didn't have the time it takes to help that patron. So making sure the entire staff of the library is familiar with the P.A.S.S approach and with AAC, what it means, the time that it takes, is going to be beneficial to everyone, not only the staff but the patron who comes in.

So in the book *Serving Patrons with Disabilities*, this is actually - will be available next week. It is distributed through the American Library Association. I wrote a chapter, I have a full chapter, it's called *Talk with Me about AAC*, and it goes into all of this and much more detail. It tells some cute stories about my daughter and all that great stuff. But this is also a wonderful addition to any library because not only does it talk about AAC users, each chapter addresses a different disability, or a different need. So it talks about service animals, it talks about hearing impaired, sight impaired, and this is distributed through ALA and it will be available next week.

So the very last slide is just some quick tips. This poster - I don't know hand out, whatever you want to call it. Is actually available on my website. So right here, JackieKruzie.com, it is free, you can download it, you can print it out, there's a black and white version. If you don't want to print out this pretty, colorful version. I just love the color purple so that's the color I made it. But this could be a quick reference. You can hang this in your back room. You can put it at the circulation desk just as a quick reminder of, "Hey, if somebody comes in using this device, these are the steps we need to take in order to make sure that that patron is served the way that they need to be." So please feel free to give out my website, print that out, share it with everybody. Because we want to make sure that every person that comes into the library, not only has the access to the information they need, but is comfortable talking to you. Because as librarians, that is our goal.

So real quick, we don't have much more time. I actually wanted to give some people an opportunity to use the device to see exactly how long it takes and how uncomfortable it can be. Does anybody want to be my guinea pig? Anyone want to come up here and use the device? I promise I made it easy for you. Yeah. Oh, you have a question, that's just fine.

>> TREVOR: So how difficult or expensive is a device like this? Like if I wanted to have one in my building for somebody who needed the additional assistance?

>> JACKIE KRUIE: That is an excellent question. So he wants to know how expensive this is in case he wanted it in his building. So an iPad, you know, is just the regular price of an iPad, I'm sure there's probably a grant that you can get. This particular app, this is called Proloquo2Go, is this app. And it is for all levels, all ages, we just happen to have hers specifically for a child with a childlike voice and all of that. It's a \$500 dollar app. However, in October of every month, it is AAC Awareness Month - don't know if you guys know that - it is half price and you get it for \$250. The app allows up to two downloads, which is why I can have it on my device and she could have it on hers. And it's the same, like every - everything on her personal device is also on this, in case it gets lost, broken, or whatever. We have it - we have a backup. So yeah, about \$500 just for the app unless you buy it in October. Would you like to try to use it?

>> TREVOR: Yeah.

>> JACKIE KRUIE: Okay. So, Proloquo2Go.

>> TREVOR: I'm going to have to Google that in a minute.

>> JACKIE KRUIE: Yeah, so if you could just say "Hello, I am..." and then right here you can type in your name.

>> TREVOR: Awesome. "Hello, I am T-R-E-V-O-R." Oh, okay. "Yes, I am Trevor."

>> JACKIE KRUIE: Yes, Trevor. Thank you so much. So I do have one question for you, Trevor. And how did you feel while you were doing that?

>> TREVOR: I've used other text to speech devices before so it felt actually a little bit more intuitive than some of the other stuff I have used.

>> JACKIE KRUIE: Okay, thank you. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I always kind of feel like - so how you guys ever been in the grocery store and you get change and you're like, trying to stuff in the change, but the other person's groceries are coming up and you're like, "Okay, okay." That's how I feel every time I use this device. I feel like I'm in a hurry, that I'm being rushed, even though the person on the other side is not trying to rush me. It is just something that I feel. So knowing that, knowing that that's how I feel, I can't even imagine how my daughter must feel for every single conversation that she wants to have. It must be tedious and it must be frustrating. So again, that's why I created this P.A.S.S approach to help others speak to her and to put everyone at ease and kind of ease that awkward tension that comes when that social contract isn't quite met when we interact with one another. So that's all my 20 minutes and I really do appreciate all of you guys. Are there any other questions? Oh, okay. Well, yes, and I'll be right here for a few more moments. So thank you so much. I was so worried that nobody was going to show up so I appreciate it. Thank you.