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Creating Connections

The Open University

Supporting people with learning disabilities to use technology

A TOOLKIT FOR MANAGERS



July 2021

This toolkit has been written by Jane Seale with contributions from Creating Connections members.

To cite this document: Jane Seale (2021) Supporting people with learning disabilities to use technology: a toolkit for managers. Milton Keynes, The Open University. © The Open University

If you are interested in trialling the toolkit in your own homes, organisations or contexts please contact the author at **jane.seale@open.ac.uk**



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Introduction

Many people that we are calling supporters are employed by some kind of organisation or service. This might be a self-advocacy or advocacy organisation, a learning disability charity, a day service, a care home or residential home, a supported living organisation, a school or college, a local authority or an NHS Trust. These supporters therefore do not work on their own. They have managers who organise and supervise what they do. Often there are funders who pay for the support being provided and check the quality of that support in order to decide whether to keep paying for it. If people with learning disabilities are not getting effective support to use technologies, we would argue that managers and funders of support services have a responsibility to make sure that this changes.

Managers and funders of support services may find it helpful to use the toolkit to help them think about:

- What their organisation or service does to make sure that they employ or recruit supporters who are willing and able to support people with learning disabilities to use technology
- What induction, training and professional development opportunities their organisation or services offers to ensure that their supporters can develop the beliefs and knowledge necessary to provide effective support for using technology.

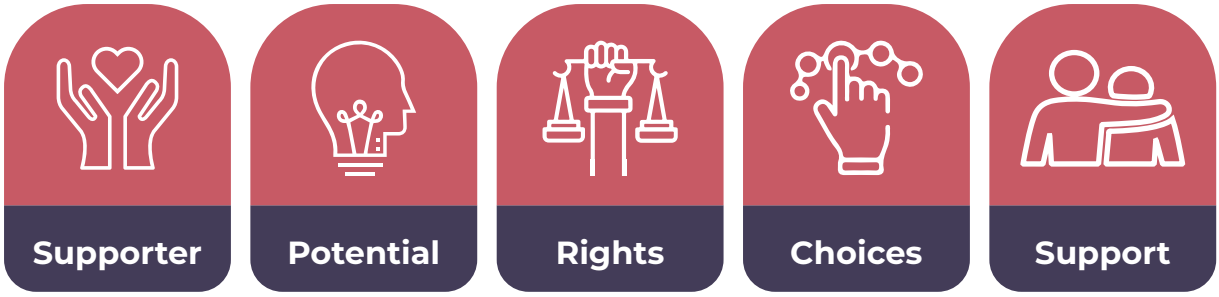
- Whether the organisation or service policies and processes encourage or discourage their supporters to support people with learning disabilities to use technology.

In this section we offer guidance regarding how each of the core beliefs and areas of knowledge might be enacted or enabled in practice. For each core belief or area of knowledge:

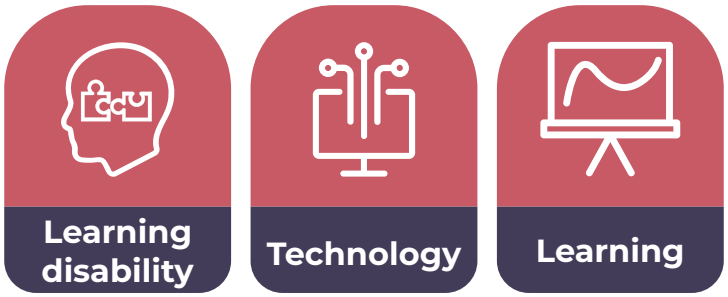
- We provide a list of suggested activities that would reflect or demonstrate each core belief or area of knowledge. We are not suggesting that people do every single thing mentioned in the list of suggested activities and we are aware that one action may be relevant for more than one belief or area of knowledge.
- We offer case studies that either reinforce the importance of the core belief or area of knowledge and understanding or provide examples of helpful support practices.
- We sign-post additional resources or examples that can support implementation of the ideas contained within the examples.
- We provide a planning and evaluation tool that can be used to reflect on current support practice and plan future support practices.

It may also be useful to read the toolkits for people with learning disabilities and supporters in order get an overview of what activities are being suggested for them to engage in and to plan how these can be supported.

Icons for core values:



Icons for knowledge and understanding:





Core Belief 1: The supporter role

Description

Support is effective when supporters believe that an important part of their role is to help people with learning disabilities to use technology if they want to.

Suggested actions for managers and funders

- Include technology in the role and job descriptions for supporters.
- In interviews for new supporters ask for examples of how they have enabled a person with a learning disability to use technology.
- Include technology support in any informal or formal appraisal of supporters' practice.

Case Study Example 1

An overview of the role of digitisers at Surrey Choices

As part of Surrey Choices' Digital Inclusion Strategy, they have been finding out what the barriers are to IT for the people they support and the people they share their homes with. They have been working to overcome those barriers by their input and signposting to other support long-term and prioritising those people who live at home alone or with their families to reduce isolation.

To support this strategy they now have Digitisers across Surrey Choices. These are staff who will enable the people they support to not only have access to technology, but to feel safe and confident using different devices and being online.

What can the Digitisers help with?

- Advising the people they support on what types of IT they might want to buy for their needs.
- Setting up a tablet or computer so that they can keep in touch with friends, families and Surrey Choices.
- Provide short-term internet access for example, a sim card for a device if they do not have it in their home now.
- Offer some short-term support as people start to use their kit including socially distanced visits and telephone help.

Here are some of the ways the Digitisers have been supporting people:

- Help with joining Digital Choices Live and Video online sessions.
- Online support to be able to search for jobs.
- Teaching people how to connect with their friends and families no matter how far away they are.

- Helping people to download apps.
- Supporting people to learn new skills like sending an email or using WhatsApp.
- Helping people to get Wi-Fi installed in their house.

Source: **surrey-choices/the-surrey-choices-digitisers/**

Case Study Example 2

Jane Seale reflects on the outcomes of her Internet search for supporter job descriptions that include technology related core beliefs, knowledge and understanding.

In searching the internet for job adverts and job specifications for supporters I came across very few examples where there was an overt mention of being willing and able to support people with learning disabilities to use technologies. So I don't have a range of perfect examples to share with you. But, based on what I found I can offer some starting points. With regards to knowledge and understanding, I came across some examples where IT skills was mentioned, but not specifically in relation to directly supporting a person with a learning disability to use technology. It was often related to administrative tasks such as record-keeping. Examples of phrases within these specifications include:

- "You also need to have basic level IT skills to be able to use a computer as you will regularly need to record information about the people you are supporting".
- "Knowledge of and an ability to demonstrate effective use of Microsoft Office Word & Outlook and internet online systems."

It would not take too much effort or imagination to add to or adapt these sentences to indicate that an ability to use tablets, smartphones and communication tools such as Zoom, Messenger or WhatsApp media would be beneficial in order to support people with learning disabilities to connect with their families, friends and communities. One rare example I did find was from KeyRing who were advertising for an IT Volunteer. Part of the advert read:

"As a Keyring IT volunteer, you could: Help set up new devices or troubleshoot tech issues; Help people to make connections with other people in their local communities; Provide one-to-one tech support to local people in their own homes; Help drive our social media project"

I also found one job advert from the Brandon Trust, where characteristics that link very strongly to knowing how to learn through problem-solving

(Knowledge and Understanding: 3) were included in the core specification. Characteristics included: “innovative problem-solver; flexible attitude, willing to try new activities; resilient and adaptable.” With reference to the examples in this toolkit, it should be possible to apply these characteristics to supporting people with learning disabilities to use technology.

Resources to help you

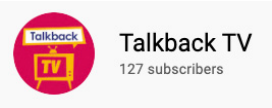
Talk Back Digital

Talkback
DEVELOPING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

Talk Back provide a range of services for people with learning disabilities that support their personal development. One service they offer is Talk Back Digital, a range of online activity-based sessions. Videos of many of these sessions are available on Talk Back TV

Link to website

Talk Back TV



Link to YouTube channel

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 1: What are you currently doing to encourage your staff to believe that an important part of a supporter's role is to help people with learning disabilities to access and use technology.? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity check one face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
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Core belief 1: What new things can you do in the next three months to encourage your staff to believe that an important part of a supporter's role is to help people with learning disabilities to access and use technology.? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with your staff.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
		
		
		
		



Core Belief 2: The potential of people with learning disabilities

Description

Support is effective when supporters believe that people with learning disabilities have the potential to use technology successfully.

Suggested actions for managers and funders

- Identify and capture examples of people with learning disabilities successfully using technology and find ways within the service for these examples to be shared.
- Provide access to technologies such as cameras so that supporters and people with learning disabilities can capture examples of successful technology use for sharing.

Case Study Example 3

A parent explains how her daughter, who finds communication difficult, is actually very competent and confident at using technology

My daughter loves gadgets and she also likes symbols of ordinary life. She's got an iPad and she's got a smartphone and she has used them a lot. Partly because she finds speaking very difficult, she really does struggle. So she uses for example live chats if she's wanting to buy something, or has any problem, where there's a facility to do a live chat, she will do that and she's very competent with doing that. But if she had to go on the phone to the same person, she would really struggle and they probably wouldn't understand her because she voice would be so tiny. So she's used technology for things like that. I mean she uses it for entertainment as well, for watching telly. She uses it for things like WhatsApp. She also uses Facebook private messenger a lot.

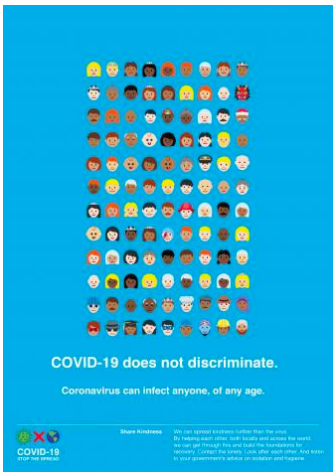
She downloaded Zoom by herself. I certainly didn't help her. I'm sure that help would have been available if she'd needed it, but I don't think she did. I think she probably just got on with it. We have used it in the family and I suppose like a lot of families we've always had a WhatsApp, so we've got family groups. So she's been used to having that kind of contact, but that's not video. So I think the video thing is a much bigger thing for her, than it probably is for a lot of us. it's a bit strange [during lockdown] I suppose again like a lot of people, there was an initial rush of oh we must have some family time on Zoom. So we did that with my sister and brother-in-law, so she'd had a bit of that I suppose to see what it was like. And she's used Facetime as well and has been using Facetime throughout with her boyfriend who she's obviously not seen since March. So she's quite confident with that.

When my daughter had her birthday last month, the whole family clubbed together to get a smart telly and her supporters did help her to set that up, which is great, because she can now use yet another device. And it's a monster, it's absolutely horrendous, it's gigantic. She's shown us the different apps on the screen. She has been able to use it for streaming endless Mr Bean or the Simpsons or Spotify.

Source: http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/

Resources to help you

Peter and Friends Talk About Covid



This freely downloadable book is a collaboration between Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, London South Bank University and the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. In it, people with learning disabilities and their friends talk about the experience of living through the covid-19 pandemic. On pages 149-151, Greg shares how using his Xbox cheered him up. On pages 154-157 Mikey explains how online Zoom and Teams meeting have helped him.

Link to book

Your Voice Wall



Talk Back have created space on their website for 'Your Voice Wall 'which they explain has been created to give people with learning disabilities the chance to showcase their creativity. Could you do something similar?

Link to website

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 2: What are you currently doing to encourage your staff to believe that people with learning disabilities have the potential to use technology successfully? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
		
		
		
		

Core belief 1: What new things can you do in the next three months to encourage your staff to believe that people with learning disabilities have the potential to use technology successfully? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with your staff.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
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Core Belief 3: The rights of people with learning disabilities to make informed choices

Description

Support is effective when supporters believe in the rights of people with learning disabilities to make informed choices about their technology use and therefore support them to understand the possible benefits of using technology and provide them the opportunity to express their interest (or lack of interest) in using technology.

Suggested actions for managers and funders

- Ensure that supporters and people with learning disabilities can access information about technologies and how to use them. This might entail the sourcing of training courses, online videos, equipment catalogues or external consultants.
- Ensure that informed choice is included in care or support plans.
- Ensure that informed choice is included in any organisational policy and related paperwork relating to person-centred support.
- Work in partnership with service users and supporters to identify and create case studies where with support, people with learning disabilities have decided to use/not use technology.

Case Study Example 4

Colin explains the choices he has made about his technology use

Colin has attended a day service centre for over ten years. He attends a regular computer session at the centre. One project that staff at the centre supported Colin with was using a Dictaphone to record his memories and put them in a wiki. He was also supported to use a programme called 'Audacity' to edit his recordings.

Colin was helped by support staff at his home to buy a tablet, which he finds easier to use than a desktop PC because he prefers to touch the screen rather than using a mouse. He uses his tablet to listen to music, watch YouTube videos, watch TV programmes and go on Facebook.

He says: "It's good because I can do whatever I want with it. I used to look up artwork on the Internet. I love art. I put some of my work in a competition and it got through to the Tate."

Source: https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/6621/5467

Resources to help you

Surviving Through Stories is a project that sought to give people with learning disabilities a voice during the pandemic by collecting stories about their experiences.

Laptops and the things I've learnt about them	In this story, Andy talks about what he has learnt about how to use laptops. Link to Andy's story
My Life during coronavirus	In this story, Kristian talks about playing video games and using Zoom to keep in touch with his family and his day centre. Link to Kristian's story
Fitness classes on zoom, watching Family Guy, and Boris' boring speeches	In this story, a person with a learning disability who wanted to say anonymous talks about doing zoom calls, online classes and watching Netflix. Link to story
Life in Lockdown: Lucy, October 2020	In this story, Lucy talks about the online creative workshops she has attended. Link to Lucy's story
Paul and Jackie's Lockdown experience	In this story, Paul talks about his use of Facebook. Link to Paul's story
Tales from the life in lockdown Tuesday Group	In this story, a member of the Lockdown Tuesday group talks about what he misses his volunteer work where he used to use computers. Link to story

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 3: What are you currently doing to encourage your staff to believe that people with learning disabilities have the right to make informed choices about their technology use? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
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Core belief 3: What new things can you do in the next three months to encourage your staff to believe that people with learning disabilities have the right to make informed choices about their technology use? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with your staff.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
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Core Belief 4: The rights of people with learning disabilities to use technology

Description

Support is effective when supporters believe that people with learning disabilities have a right to use technology if they want to and that if they want to use technology, they should be supported to use it.

Suggested actions for managers and funders

- Ensure that access to and use of technology is included in care or support plans.
- Ensure that living spaces, including bedrooms are connected to the Internet/wi-fi or that people are supported to set up internet/wi-fi in their own homes.
- For care homes and supported living homes, provide appropriate spaces that people with learning disabilities can use when they wish to use technology to communicate with friends and family.
- Ensure that organisational polices include consideration of how people with learning disabilities can use technology that belong to the service provider if they do not possess their own technology.
- Ensure that when the quality of the support service is being reviewed, the extent to which they support use of technology is included in the review process.
- Identify internal and external sources of funding so that cost and affordability cannot be used as reasons not to support people with learning disability to use technology.

Case Study Example 5

A charity adapts their policy regarding staff using their personal phones

During lockdown we relaxed the phone policies so staff could help with their phones to keep people in contact with their families and things like that on WhatsApp and video calls, which was really positive. Usually our policy is that staff aren't allowed to use their personal phones for work purposes. It was a safeguarding issue. But during lockdown, we were just looking for the quickest option for people to stay connected because the managers were really conscious it was about people becoming isolated at home.

Source: http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/

Case Study Example 6

A self-advocate talks about the work they do inspecting supported living services as a 'quality-checker' for their County Council.

As a person with a learning disability, I use my experience to check how good the lives of people who use services are. We visit people in their own homes or spend time with people who use services and find out what it is like for them. Before the pandemic I would say that we did not see many examples of technology being used, but I think because of the pandemic people are trying to get their heads around it. So, at the moment we do specifically ask if they have the Internet. But also, there are other questions we ask that could relate to technology. For example: "How do you keep active?" and "How are you keeping in touch with your family and friends?" This is how technology could come into play.

Source: **http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/**

Case Study Example 7

A teacher of students with profound and multiple learning disabilities describes why they persuaded their manager to change their policy about the use of a particular tool

We were using Google Meet, but very few of my parents could get their head around it or wanted to use it. I think it was unfamiliarity - and I think our parents are under so much pressure. It's just one more thing to learn when they have got so much more else to do. So basically, I said: well what are you already using? Everyone was using Zoom - it was a no-brainer. You just use what people are comfortable with, providing you can put the right safe-guarding steps in place. On Zoom you can set up a waiting room, which means you can filter who is coming in. And I basically only let in people who I knew should be there. By that time, I had also learnt how to send a message to someone in the waiting room. So I got clearance from my manager that they would let me use Zoom - because originally, we were told that we must still use Google Meet. So when I said - I can set Zoom up with a waiting room - I can cover all the safeguarding elements, I know how to do that - they said - well yes alright. And that worked really, really well.

Source: **http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/**

Case Study Example 8

A sibling describes the different technologies her sister uses and how the supported living home both helps and hinders that use

Where she lived before, they didn't have any technology - they weren't using it at all - but when she came here, they all had tablets, so I helped her get an iPad. She was using that to access BBC iPlayer.

We've got a Sky package which has got some Sky Go's on it, and we'd put one of those on for her - she likes sport, they have got Sky in her house but they haven't got the sport package.

Where she lived before, she could turn on the television, she could manage the plug socket to turn it on and off, she can't manage a normal control, but I did get an adaptive control but she struggled to use that, but it may be the staff need to give her more time to get used to using it. Basically she can't turn the television on herself. I did buy her an Alexa and a smart plug, thinking that might be useful to turn on the television or something else in her room, but she can't get internet access in her room. In the supporting living house they haven't got internet access in their bedrooms.

Also, the way her bedroom is setup means that she can't use technology in there. They have just got a bed and storage, and perhaps a chair in their room, they're not really setup to be on a device, there's no table there, so the only table is the dining room table in the communal area. So she can't use her iPad in her bedroom because she'd have to prop up an iPad on her lap because there's no table.

Even with her phone, she has to stand up to use it and - so it's not like you're ever going to have a long chatty phone conversation. She hasn't got that option because the phone's not in a position where she can sit with it, you know it's setup so she's stood.

Source: **http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/**



Resources to help you

The Click Hub

During the first lockdown Windward Day Services created a solely online provision for their service users. It was so successful that they have developed it further. This web page outlines the service and provides an insight into the importance of being connected online for people with learning disabilities.

Link to website

My Life My Choice Computer Buddies

Computers Buddies is a project that supports people with learning disabilities to learn how to use technology and connect online.

Link to project

Why the Internet is important to me

In this blog, Dawn who works for Inclusion North as a leadership coach, explains how essential having the Internet is for her to keep working and enjoying life.

Link to blog

Department of Health: Learning Disabilities Good Practice Project



This was a project where people with learning disabilities were involved in identifying and verifying examples of good practice. One of the examples shared in the report (page 42) is from the Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust and Cornwall Adult Care and Support who set up a loan service that provides tablets and small MP3 players with touch screens, so that people with learning disabilities and families can try them out as communication aids.

Link to PDF

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 4: What are you currently doing to encourage your staff to believe that people with learning disabilities have the right to use technology if they want to and that if they want to use technology, they should be supported to use it? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
		
		
		
		

Core belief 4: What new things can you do in the next three months to encourage your staff to believe that people with learning disabilities have the right to use technology if they want to and that if they want to use technology, they should be supported to use it? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with your staff.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 🙁 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
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Core Belief 5: Person-centred support

Description

Support is effective when supporters believe that support to use technology should be customised to ensure that all of a person with learning disabilities technology needs are met.

Suggested actions for managers and funders

- Ensure that access to and use of technology is included in any organisational policy and related paperwork relating to person-centred support.
- Ensure that when risk assessments are undertaken in relation to people with learning disabilities using technology, supporters know how common risks such as online safety can be managed without denying people access.
- Provide access to tools such as Multi-Me to enable people who cannot communicate for themselves to share and record their technology use, needs and aspirations.

Case Study Example 9

A service provider explains how they match technology to people and match supporters to people

At the minute we have got around 100 customers that we are looking at and how we can support. We are taking a range of approaches. We have acquired 20 tablets. Some of those will be given to customers who are at home living on their own to permanently keep. Others are being loaned to residential homes for a couple of months - with a view that in that time they then buy a tablet for that customer. So if they are anxious about security with Zoom or using IT equipment that might have staff information on that isn't appropriate, they have got time to buy it - but at least the customers aren't being excluded because they have got the loan tablet. It is developing.

We are looking at the possibility of buying things like Chrome-stacking sticks, which as I understand it, means you can project the Zoom onto a television. I think the idea is that if you have got a residential home with 7 customers you can't really be all crowded around a tablet, but if you can put it on a big TV screen then lots of you can join in a cooking session. The idea is that we might buy some of those and again loan them to a residential home to enable them to trial before they commit to buying one.

We have a team of digitizers and they have all got different skills. We have got a spreadsheet of all the skills that staff said they had. It might be installing Wi-fi, it might be helping people to get onto Zoom, it might be doing online shopping and then I simply match the customer, with the nearest digitizer and link them up through the keyworker. And then they go and visit or do stuff remotely by phone.

Case Study Example 10

An adult social care provider describes how they tailored support to match individual preferences

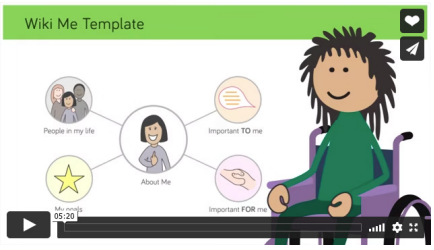
People don't always want to be on social media. We sent out a survey, very early on and said do you want to be connected, because not everybody does want to be connected. Some of the people that we support- they just want support with their bills or help with reading mail. They have got their own lives- they are not interested in connecting with the community. Other people were desperate to be connected. We asked them very simple questions like do you want to be connected just one on one, do you want to be in a small group, do you have a telephone, do you feel comfortable using the telephone, do you write, do you feel comfortable writing and reading letters and do you use video calls. And then we matched people together as best we could. And then we used teleconferencing facilities to introduce people to one another.

We were very flexible and innovative in how we did and not everybody took it up and some people said this is a great idea but we will just take it up locally. It was patchy in terms of people wanting to be involved, but everything worked towards making people think about how they could connect to people. It was never about how many people took it up and how many people came to the Zoom sessions it was about "that facility is there for me and if she can do it, I can do it as well".

Sources: http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/

Resources to help you

Stay connected with the Rix MultiMe Toolkit



This a video created by the Rix Centre that explains what the MultiMe Toolkit is and how it can help people with learning disabilities to have their voices heard as they organise their education, health and social care.

Link to video

HFT Fusion Model of Support



HFT is a charity that support people with learning disabilities. A major aspect of what they do is the provision of personalised technology. This web page provides a good overview of how this fits with their person-centred model of support.

Link to website

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 5: What are you currently doing that shows you believe that support to use technology should be customised to ensure that all of the technology needs of a person with learning disabilities are met? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
	😀 😐 😕	
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Core belief 5: What new things can you do in the next three months to show that you believe that support to use technology should be customised to ensure that all of the technology needs of a person with learning disabilities are met? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with the person you support and where appropriate in consultation with your manager and other team members.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 🙁 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
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Knowledge and Understanding 1: The person with a learning disability who is being supported

Description

Support is effective when supporters:

- Understand why the person with a learning disability wants to use a particular technology and whether and how they might need support to use technology.
- Know what technologies the person being supported currently uses and any additional technologies they might wish to use in the future.

Suggested actions for managers or funders

- Build in opportunities and processes within the organisation for service users to self-advocate and share with supporters.
- Work in partnership with service users and supporters to identify and create case studies of the different ways in which people with learning disabilities within the service have used technology. Plan how these case studies might be used as part of induction or training programmes.

Case Study Example 11

A sibling describes the decision-making process for choosing a range of technologies to support her sister who lives in a supported living environment

My sister has cerebral palsy so she doesn't have the fine motor controls needed to work a telly or a computer. Also there's mild learning difficulties, so if anything goes wrong, she is at a loss, she doesn't know what to do. She always has a mobile phone she carries about, but what we have to do is program the numbers then, so we have to start it alphabetically so that she - she has got my number as a priority, but then she can count down and you know see the capital letter, and that's - her goal.

When she moved into this new flat, there was a lot of technology that was going to be embedded into the flat. For example we've got the Canary system which lets us monitor her movements in the house, and she was very happy with that, because she knew if we could see if she was in the flat or not, that seemed to reassure her.

We were looking at a computer system to do things like online shopping, but she wasn't that comfortable with it because she likes to go out, but

when lockdown started it changed. This was really distressing for her because she didn't have any way of seeing us. She can phone us on a landline, and she could phone us on a mobile, but the thing about not being able to see your family was really distressing. So I'd looked at the advert and this portal was being discussed on Facebook, and very much by people who are older members of family who couldn't cope with technology, and it seemed to be a fairly straightforward procedure for them. It's like a tablet, so there are various sizes, there's a small mini one, which is like a larger tablet phone - then there's one that's almost like a small television and then there's one that actually works through your television, one of the great things about it is the camera can actually follow you, so if a child was doing a wee dance or something, the camera would follow the movement, now my sister is in a wheelchair, she didn't have that capacity to move out, but what it did do is if she dipped her head down, if she moved sideways it did follow her, the portal does lots of stuff, it will tell stories, it will show you pictures, you can go on Facebook, you can do group calls.

My husband who works in IT, programmed this portal so that the faces would come up, instead of numbers, so there'd be five family member faces, and my sister just pressed the face and she could phone - this was amazing, I mean this was absolutely amazing, this was absolutely brilliant, we managed to set this up with one of the carers who was very, very good.

She did have a Google system, but she can't say Google. She has speech difficulties - so she was calling it Doogle so it wouldn't answer to Doogle. She had real trouble she wanted to play ABBA and she wanted to play her music but the thing wouldn't listen to her commands, this one's she's got is Alexa - I think she can say OK Alexa much easier than Google. So what we would like to do is to try and explore her using Alexa to get music into her flat to be able to listen to - and also the story telling facility.

Sources: **http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/**



Resources to help you

Ashley's week



Ace Anglia have hosted weekly blogs where people with learning disabilities use photographs and film to share what they have been up to. In this blog, Ashley shares how she uses Facebook to message her family and to set up a business for selling cards that she makes.

Link to blog

Joel's Week



Ace Anglia have hosted weekly blogs where people with learning disabilities use photographs and film to share what they have been up to. In this blog, Joel shares how he likes using TikTok to make and watch videos and meet new people.

Link to blog

Talking to Graham about Lockdown and getting on Zoom



In this Ace Anglia video Daisy and Graham chat about Graham's feelings about lockdown and using Zoom to connect with people and about taking pictures on his phone when goes for walk.

Link to video

Planning and Evaluation

Knowledge and Understanding 1: What are you currently doing that shows you understand why a person with a learning disability wants to use technology and what technology they currently use or wish to use? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 😕 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
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Knowledge and Understanding 1: What new things can you do in the next three months to show that you understand why a person with a learning disability wants to use technology and what technology they currently use or wish to use? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with the person you support and where appropriate in consultation with your manager and other team members.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 🙁 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
		
		
		
		



Knowledge and Understanding 2: Technology

Description

Support is effective when supporters:

- Know of the potential benefits that using technology might offer the person with a learning disability who is being supported.
- Know how to use the technologies that the person with a learning disability is using or wants to use.
- Know the typical difficulties that people with learning disabilities have in using technology and how they can be supported to overcome these difficulties.

Suggested actions for managers and funders

- Build into induction programmes for new supporters, knowledge of and use of technology
- Provide regular training and professional development opportunities for supporters to maintain and develop their technology related skills
- Identify role models or 'digital champions' within the service who have a role in sharing what they know and modelling effective support practice to others.

Case Study Example 12

A manager of a day service supports their staff by building up confidence

When we wanted to offer Zoom sessions, we picked all the staff who we knew were good face to face session leaders to start with. Out of those, two or four people were super confident about offering sessions online. But some people felt that they couldn't do it online. So most people we built up and really supported them.

So we always had two members of staff in the session and made the 'stronger' person the lead. And then over a few weeks people got much more confident. Also, every day for each of the centres separately we had an end of day chat at three o'clock. So there was no activity, it was just a chance for service users to come and talk. So, the supporters who were less confident started doing the end of day-chats. It was less pressure, but it built up their confidence they started having some really good ideas about what they could do actually. So yes, we built people up.

Case Study Example 13

A charity supports their staff by providing in-service training

We had access to funding which meant that every house in our service had access to a tablet there. And we provided internal training, talking staff through how to download Zoom. I was also available to provide back-up. I had every meeting number and password, and it was even simple things that sometimes staff didn't know how to put a capital letter on the phone to be able to type in the Zoom password, and it's being able to then - on my personal phone - video call the staff on their phone so it's kind of like a big group effort from everyone.

Source: **http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/**



Resources to help you

Providing remote support as an organisation: switching to online	This is a guide produced by AbilityNet on how to set up and offer remote support on using phones and tablets.
Digital Unite Aspire Network	Digital Unite is a social enterprise that specialises in Digital Champion training and support. One component of this is the Aspire Champions Network which provides dedicated online training and tools for staff, volunteers and carers to develop the confidence and knowledge to help adults with learning disabilities to develop their digital skills they need for work and life.
Digital Unite Technology Guides	Digital Unite also have a range of technology guides available on their website that cover computer basics, email and Skype, using the Internet, hobbies and interests and internet security.
Digitiser Case Studies	Surrey Choices have set up a network of digital champions that they call 'digitisers', whose role is to support people with learning disabilities to get online.
Skills for Care webinar resources	In the learning and development section of the Skills for Care website there is a section on Supporting people with everyday technology. This includes links to useful webinar resources that cover identifying the barriers and risks of not having access to everyday technology and helping people understand and balance risks and benefits.

Planning and Evaluation

Knowledge and Understanding 2: What are you currently doing that shows you understand the potential benefits of technology, know how use technology, know the typical difficulties people with learning disabilities experience when using technology and how to manage these difficulties? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so ☹️ = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
		
		
		
		

Knowledge and Understanding 2: What new things can you do in the next three months to show that you understand the potential benefits of technology, know how use technology, know the typical difficulties people with learning disabilities experience when using technology and how to manage these difficulties? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with the person you support and where appropriate in consultation with your manager and other team members.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 🙁 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
		
		
		
		



Knowledge and Understanding 3: How to learn

Description

Support is effective when supporters:

- Know how to problem-solve when unexpected problems with technology happen.
- Are able to learn from the positive and negative experiences of using technology and share what has been learnt with others.

Suggested actions for managers and funders

- Build in opportunities in staff meetings and other organisational events where team members get together for the sharing of technology related experiences. Explore ways in which these might be used to develop a culture whereby supporters are not afraid to fail i.e. willing to try new practices and learn from what worked and did not work from these practices.
- Find ways to reward and recognise supporters who have not been afraid to try using technology, particularly when success was not guaranteed and they had to find ways to solve particular problems.
- Be approachable to supporters so that they have someone with whom they can plan their technology related support and then reflect on the success and failure of their plans.

Case Study Example 14

An adult social care provider demonstrates problem-solving by 'thinking outside the box'

One of the things that really struck me - that a member of staff did - they were using the telephone, but instead of talking to one person, they wanted to talk to more than one person, so we set up teleconferencing for that and that was great. But one woman said, that is not going to work for me - what I want to do is I want to support my member to be able to ring the landlord and I want to be on the phone with them - teleconferencing is not going to work - because I have to give that number to the landlord (which would breach their privacy).

So we looked into it and actually there is a facility on the phone whereby you just ring a member and then you add a call- there is just a little button on there that says add call - and you can add the landlord and you can be there with both people at the same time - supporting the member to make that call for themselves - adding anything that you think has been missed and helping to decode

the call afterwards. That didn't necessarily cost anything. It didn't need a wi-fi access, it didn't need anything, it just needed somebody to say - there is that function somewhere that we can do that.

That opened up a world of possibilities for people that had usually gone in and sat next to somebody while they had made those difficult phone calls. So we need to be thinking beyond the social media.

Case Study Example 15

A manager of a day service encourages learning through reflective 'de-brief' chats

One of my staff members she was not comfortable with the technology at all - she was upside down and the phone was falling. It was a lot of work getting her past that. "I don't know what I'm doing" she would say. I told her that the service users would appreciate the effort. They'll appreciate that you're doing something. I also talked her through it - this is what you do - get on there. and I talked her through it.

Afterwards we'd have a de-brief chat, we'd talk about how we could improve, about taking a video of yourself, practice, having the lighting, and that kind of thing. Nothing too deep, but just little things as we go along. And each time reassuring her, she'd be like "oh my god it kept cutting out" and this and that, and I said: "They appreciate the effort." I kept pushing her to be fair, and yeah, now she does it.

Case Study Example 16

A service provider reflects on what they have learnt about how best to help supporters

At the beginning staff were spending ages making videos - but we hadn't given them enough guidance about the content, or the way that the videos were made. So obviously our customers are adults and somebody had spent ages doing this beautiful session about reading, but they had used a children's book- so it is that sort of thing. Now we have got guidance saying - is it age appropriate? Had you thought of whether it has got an outcome attached to it, rather than watching a Disney video together - that's not learning, that is just taking time up. So it is that sort of guidance that we needed to do first.

I think training for staff is part of the planning really. Saying to staff - here is an iPad, can you go and do this when they have never done it in their life before is quite tricky. If someone had said to me, can you make a video on your phone. I wouldn't really have known how to do that for a 30-minute video. So it is about equipping your staff with the skills.

Case Study Example 17

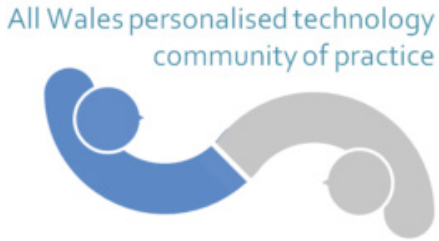
A Support Service 'problem-solves' how to respond to the pandemic by being open to ideas

In the lead up to lockdown, people were starting to get quite stressed or were showing signs of having a real problem with it all. I think in a way the leadership team within the service, plus all the staff that were working with people were getting together and saying look we need to do something about this, we can't just do nothing. We have to do something. It doesn't matter how big it is; it can be just a small thing. We need to put something up there [on website]. And so our CEO, then said, right I'm listening, yes that's brilliant - totally agree with that, let's do it, let's start the ball rolling, let's see what we can do, let's see what's possible to set up. From there on in, it didn't really stop really. It was just every day, every week, something else would be developed and it got better and better.

Sources: **http://oro.open.ac.uk/75127/**

Resources to help you

The All-Wales Personalised Technology Community of Practice



One effective way of learning is joining a community of peers in order to share ideas and experiences. You might like to create your own localised community of practice or join a larger community such as the All-Wales Personalised Technology Community of Practice which was established in 2019 to promote independence, choice and control for people with a learning disability through the person-centred use of technology.

Link to website

Planning and Evaluation

Knowledge and Understanding 3: What are you currently doing that shows you know how to problem-solve when unexpected difficulties with technology happen and are able to learn from negative and positive experiences of technology use? Please list below everything you are currently doing.	How well are you doing right now? For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so ☹️ = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed?
		
		
		
		

Knowledge and Understanding 3: What new things can you do in the next three months to show that you shows you know how to problem-solve when unexpected difficulties with technology happen and are able to learn from negative and positive experiences of technology use? Please list below ideas for new activities you will try out with your staff.	How well did you do? Around 3 months after you have started these new activities think about how successful you have been. For each activity circle the face that reflects how well you think you are doing. 😀 = Brilliant 😐 = So, so 🙁 = Not very well	What can you do to improve how well you do in each of the areas you have listed for the next 3 months?
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