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Creating Connections

The Open University

Supporting people with learning disabilities to use technology:

A TOOLKIT FOR SUPPORTERS



July 2021

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

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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

We are using the term ‘supporter’ as an overarching term that refers to anyone who supports a person with a learning disability to live as independently as possible. These supporters may be paid or unpaid. Supporters therefore include formal and informal carers; formal and informal advocates; employees and volunteers of self-advocacy organisations; employees and volunteers of learning disability and related charities; parents and siblings of a person with a learning disability; friends of a person with a learning disability; day service providers; health and social care providers and education, health and social care professionals.

Supporters may find it helpful to use the toolkit to help them think about:

- What they currently know about the technology related needs and motivations of the people with learning disabilities that they support.
- What the barriers are that are preventing the people with learning disabilities that they support from using technology and which of those barriers can they provide support to overcome.
- The nature and level of support to use technology they currently provide to people with learning disabilities and whether and how this might need to change.

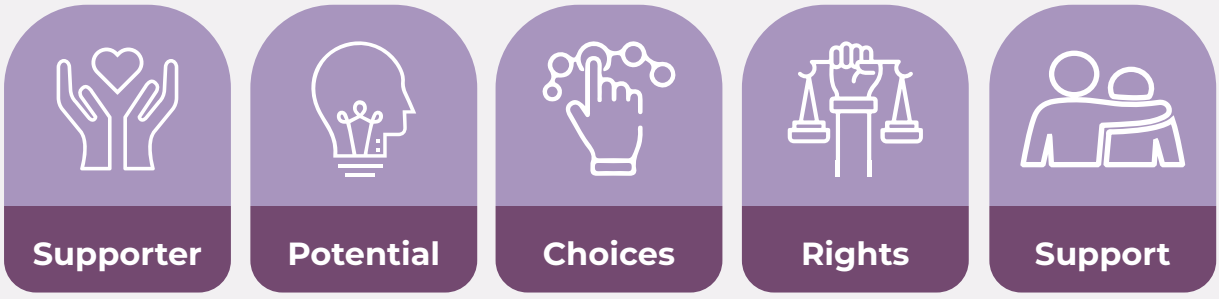
In this section we offer guidance regarding the importance of five core beliefs and three areas of knolwedge. For each core belief or area of knowledge:

- 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.

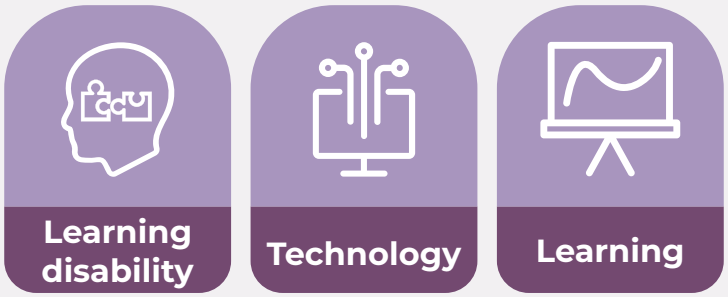
Empowering people with learning disabilities: It may also be useful to read the toolkit for people with learning disabilities. It offers lots of suggestions for activities that people with learning disabilities can do, many of which can be facilitated by supporters.

Practical help to use technology: The aim of the toolkits are not to 'teach' ICT skills, but they do contain links to useful resources that offer tips and guidance on ICT skills such as using Zoom or staying safe online.

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 supporters

- Make it clear to your manager and the people you support, what technology related skills you have.
- With support from your manager, 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.
- Ask the person you support, whether they think you have done a good job of supporting their technology needs and when you haven't done a good job. If you need to, get support from your local advocacy or self-advocacy group to do this.
- In job interviews, provide examples of how you have enabled a person with a learning disability to use technology.
- When you are being formally or informally appraised by your manager or organisation find ways to Include examples of how you have supported access to technology.

Case Study Example 1

An advocacy organisation who have learnt how support can be graduated: intense at the beginning and then decreased over time

My colleague sets an activity for the day - most of it is art related or quiz related. And we have the most amazing art projects completed. We ask them to pick a particular artist and their style and then set them the challenge of saying - could you draw this, like them. They have produced some amazing artwork. We are trying to get funding to have an art exhibition because the stuff they have created has been phenomenal.

They have talked about how they have been feeling - about missing each other - about what they want when they come out of lockdown. They have written stories; they have written poems. It is constant chat. If I am not on my phone, I can guarantee there will be at least 60 messages, just pinging through constantly.

But what's happened over time, which is really nice, is actually now they can do much more, so we can take a step back. They chat, they just carry on the chat between them, which is lovely, it's really, really good and really positive. And the artwork, the quizzes and the stories have just been brilliant. It's been really good, really valuable.

Case Study Example 2

An adult social care provider builds confidence, so that people with learning disabilities can use technology relatively independently

It is lovely to see people having conversations on Zoom. I remember there was one guy - who when we first started doing Zoom meetings. It took us about 25 minutes to get people to access a bingo card and he was one of the ones who struggled the most with it. Within 3 weeks he was teaching other people to Zoom their bingo card. Now he is running a singalong on a Friday evening. He is managing to play the music through Zoom which is something that I didn't manage to do straight away.

Sometimes we get some people joining and they don't even turn their camera on they just sit and listen and I think that is lovely. And I always say: "Hello, you are welcome to sit and listen as long as you want, but if you want to join in let me know." Some people did that at the beginning for weeks. Now they are running things.

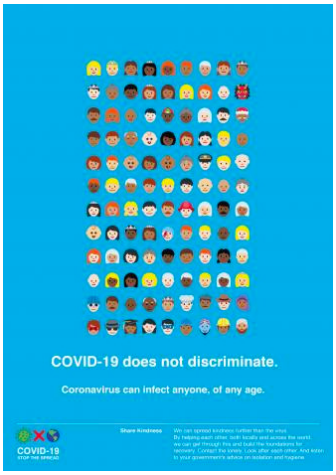
I'll often be about 5-10 minutes late to any Zoom meetings and one of them will be sharing Mr Bean on their screen or they'll be sharing something that they have found that is really interesting on YouTube. Sometimes, the longer I don't go in for, the more interaction there is. Occasionally, we get somebody new join, so we need to make sure that somebody is actually running the session, but I know for a fact that they stay on for a good half an hour or an hour after the organised activity has ended. And that is absolutely fine, because that is what it is all about - those connections.

I very rarely run sessions. I will go in and read the Bingo numbers and that is usually because nobody wants to read them, they want to play. They have certainly all hosted quiz questions. They will all have a go at gathering the quiz questions and asking the questions. So, their confidence has absolutely gone through the roof. So I am stepping further and further back from the Zoom calls whenever I can and letting the members run them themselves. I think that supporters need to take a step back. We need to move towards members doing it themselves and posting stuff themselves.

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

Resources to help you

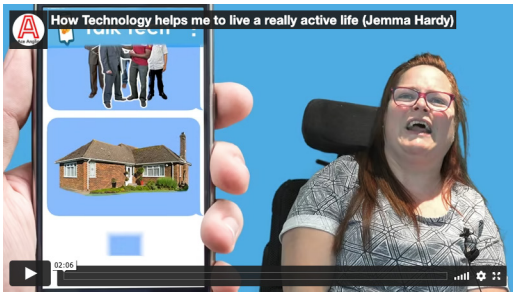
Peter and Friends Talk About Covid



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. It is not a book about technology but some of the stories do make reference to how supporters have helped Peter and friends through their use of technology. On pages 234-235 there is a nice example of a Skills Development Coach using email and Zoom.

Link to book

How Technology Helps Me



In this short film, made by Ace Anglia, Jemma talks about how technology helps her in her everyday life. She also talks about the importance of staff who can support her with the technology.

Link to video

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 1: What are you currently doing that shows you 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 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 show that you 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 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?
		
		
		
		



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 supporters

- Ask the person you support for any examples where they have successfully used technology.
- With support from your manager, provide access to tools such as Multi-Me to enable people who cannot communicate for themselves to share and record their technology achievements.
- Identify and capture examples of the people you support successfully using technology and find ways within the service or organisation for these examples to be shared.

Case Study Example 3

An advocacy organization encourages and recognizes the potential for people with learning disabilities to use Facebook to support and connect with others

Our members like posting photographs on Facebook. Facebook has all these wonderful pictures you can go back to time and time again. I think this just makes people feel happy, they promote what they're doing, they're sharing each other's achievements. One of the members took photos of all the social distancing on the buses, he shared those photos, sent them to me first, and I said to him: "Can I share them on our page, so that other people can see what the buses look like?" Because it's all very well them telling us, but without the imagery, it means nothing. So we were able to share that. Following this, some of them were talking about different things like queueing for food, so they sort of share those experiences as to what's going on.

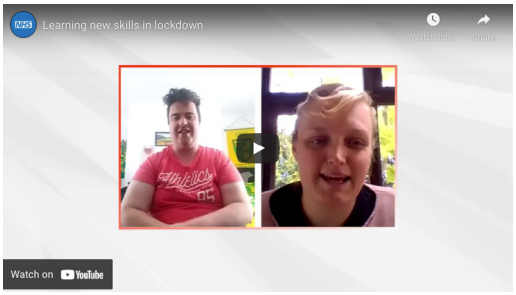
So they are growing I think in confidence and in knowing to ask for help and realising that it's not a sign of not being capable in doing something. You know it's normal to ask for help, it's normal to be upset, it's normal to get angry, it's normal to laugh at things that really shouldn't be funny, but we all do this sometimes. Because they've spent so long being told that they can't be something to actually sort of encouraging them and saying - yes you can do this - it doesn't matter if your photograph doesn't have your head in it, we can just laugh at that, it's fine! I appreciate the photos that you've taken, that

only have my chins in them. It is okay for us not to do it properly, - if you do it to the best of your ability then the more you do it the easier it is.

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

Resources to help you

Learning new skills in lockdown



In this Ace Anglia video, Ashley describes how he has learnt new skills during lockdown such as joining online social clubs where he can talk to his friends about what they have been cooking and what everyone is doing to keep busy.

Link to video

Sheffield Voices Group Video 2



Sheffield Voices is a learning disability self-advocacy group.

During the pandemic they have been running their meetings on Zoom. They meet twice a week to talk about things that affect their lives. They have created YouTube videos where members of the group talk about the benefits of being online for them.

Link to video

Electric Umbrella

Electric Umbrella is a registered charity that challenges perceptions about people with learning disabilities and empowers lives through music. As part of this work they offer daily online content that includes live singalongs and open mic nights.

Link to website

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 2: What are you currently doing that shows you 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 2: What new things can you do in the next three months to show that you believe that shows you 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 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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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 supporters

- With support from your manager, provide access to tools such as Multi-Me to enable the people you support to tell you whether or not they want to use technology.
- When you see other people using a piece of technology which the person you are supporting might be interested in using, talk to them about what they have found easy or difficult and share this with the person you are supporting.
- Ensure that the person you are supporting can access information about technologies and how to use them.
- 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. and find ways within the service or organisation for these examples to be shared.

Case Study Example 4

An adult social care provider gives advice on the importance of listening to the concerns of people with learning disabilities

There are lot of reasons why some people are scared of using the Internet. So it is important to have conversations with people about that. And then also, to definitely see using the Internet as an amazing tool that is going to be a huge part of peoples' lives. Don't be afraid of looking into it and take every step you can to help people to move forward in learning to use technology. I think hearing peoples' concerns about it is really important as well because I think there are lots of reasons why parents and people with learning difficulties are afraid of using the Internet and to look into those and see what are the barriers that people are facing and how they can be safe. We have been doing things like 'Top Tips' for staying safe online. You can also learn from

other people with learning disabilities who are already using the Internet - what they are doing to stay safe and how they feel about it.

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

Resources to help you

This is my laptop

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, Josh shares how he uses his laptop and why it is important to him.

Link to website

SafeSurfing

Inclusion Europe, MENCAP and other partners had a grant from the European Union to develop a training package for people with learning disabilities about data protection and safe online behaviour. MENCAP have made the materials available on their website. It consists of 5 PowerPoint presentations and two workshop activity handouts.

Link to website

Keeping Safe Online

The Care Management Group and CHANGE worked together on a project about how to keep safe when you are using the internet, email and social media. CHANGE made an easy read guide for people with learning disabilities. The guide has information on types of online abuse, how to keep safe online, and what to do if you are suffering from online abuse. The information for the guide was taken from focus groups with people supported by the Care Management Group.

Link to website

Living Your Life

Chris explains how taking part in a 'Live Your Life' course gave him the confidence to make decisions about leaving groups or blocking people on social media.

Link to website

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 3: What are you currently doing that shows you believe that people with learning disabilities have the right to make informed choices and 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 show that you 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 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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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 supporters

- Ask the person you support if they want to use technology, and if you need to, get support from their local advocacy or self-advocacy group to do this.
- Make it clear to your manager and the people you support, what technology related skills you have and suggest you be assigned to support someone who would benefit from these skills.
- With support from your manager, 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.
- Find out if access to and use of technology is included in the care or support plans for the person you are supporting. If you are involved in developing such plans with the person you support, ask them how technology might need to be included.
- Find out if the living spaces, including bedrooms of the people you support are connected to the Internet/wi-fi and whether the people you support need help to set up Internet/wi-fi in their own homes.
- Find out, with the support of your manager if appropriate, about any internal or external sources of funding that could be accessed to provide technology for those people you support who cannot afford the technology.

Case Study Example 5

An advocacy worker reflects on how pandemic has changed people's perspectives on the rights of people with learning disabilities to use technology

It is interesting, generally, not just with people with disabilities, that when you ask people to use technologies, they come up with all these things like GDPR. The idea that it might stop them or give them the excuse of not using the technology. Suddenly, when this pandemic happened and everybody had to use technology, those barriers suddenly disappeared. People were asking completely

different questions, so now it wasn't the sort of thinking from the risk-averse perspective, but rather from an enabling perspective.

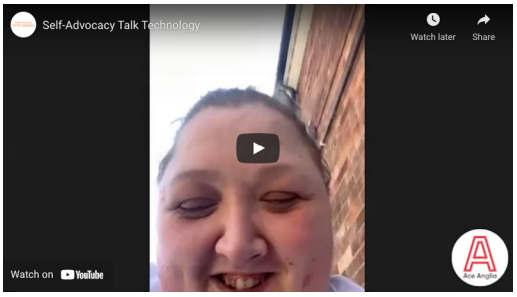
This is the way we need to do it, how can we overcome [digital exclusion]. The risks are still there, but are they looking at overcoming them rather than using them as an excuse for not using it. So that complete mind-set change and shift is lovely to see.

So yes, it is a shame that the pandemic had to happen in order for this to be seen and approached differently. But on the other hand it is a positive thing that this has happened because now, things will be different, because people will hopefully be looking from that sort of perspective of removing those barriers. An enabling approach rather than a risk-averse, disabling one.

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

Resources to help you

Self-advocates talk about technology



This is a short video made by members of the self-advocacy group 'Ace Anglia'. In the video self-advocates talk about the technology they are using, what being able to use technology means to them, and what support they have had to use technology.

Link to video

Becoming visible



Ian and Corey share how they have used Zoom and YouTube to share their dance performances and to teach others to dance. They both have aspirations to be dance teachers.

Link to website

Planning and Evaluation

Core belief 4: What are you currently doing that shows you 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 show that you 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 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?
		
		
		
		



Core Belief 5: Person-centred support

Description

Support to use technology should be customised to ensure that all of the technology needs of a person with learning disabilities are met.

Suggested actions for supporters

- With support from your manager, 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.
- If appropriate, ask a family member or advocate to help the person you are supporting communicate their technology needs.
- Find out whether access to and use of technology is included in any policy and related paperwork relating to person-centred support in the organisation where you work.
- Ensure that when you do risk assessments for the people you support, you know how common risks such as online safety can be managed without denying people with learning disabilities the opportunity or right to use technology.

Case Study Example 6

A teacher of young adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities shares how she understood the technology related needs of one of her students

So one of the gentlemen is very happy joining my online music classes. He actually belongs to the other class. But basically, his teacher said - everything she had mentioned - he had been very polite about - but not joined in with. But he has been joining in with the music sessions.

In all fairness, having worked with him before lockdown - he was very disengaged as a learner when I first started working with him and I felt that actually what was happening was that they weren't using the right approaches with him. He's a very sensory learner and he needs his learning embedded in very sensory ways. So although he is more able than the students in my class the strategies that I use to engage and draw in my students are the strategies that work with him as well.

I think people wanted him to fit into the box that he had been placed in the other class, but actually it was the wrong box for that particular student.

Case Study Example 7

An advocacy worker shares how they have used a person-centred planning tool to help people with learning disabilities build connections

MultiMe is a secure social networking tool for people with disabilities. Within this toolkit a wiki is also included - with a diary, a calendar, a goal-planning tool, charts and stories. This also enables staff to create circles of support for each individual so that each individual and the circles can communicate within that environment.

So we used the Multi-me tool for our group. We created an account for everybody and created a circle and said: "you can share all the media and share stories and whatever people wanted". We also had some sessions that were more directed - where we sort of said "what was your best moment of lock-down?" or we had a competition going about lock-down stories - what's happening in your life, what is difficult, what are you enjoying? And so in between the sessions they would be posting stuff on this social networking site. We were seeing it and we would be replying and commenting and there would be conversations going on and they felt really included. The bond was growing quite nicely actually within those sessions.

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.
Shane's wiki - a parent's story	Sam Bergin Conclaves, a parent of Shane, a young man with profound and multiple learning disabilities, shares how she and Shane have used the RIX wiki to create a multi-media based person-centred plan that documents Shanes likes, dislikes, needs and abilities.
Book of You App	This iPad App helps you create your life story and you could use it to show how technology is an important part of your life.

The Insight App	The Innovate Trust have set up a social media app to create a private sharing environment for individuals to post photos and messages to and from their families and social care professionals. As the pandemic developed this grew to running a full range of online activities for people with learning disabilities who live in Wales.
The Book Creator App	Book Creator lets you make an interactive book for an iPad or Android tablet, with colours, text and images. You can add your own videos, sound effects, speech, songs, noises or web links. Support groups such as Sibs have recognised that it can be a useful tool for family members to send interactive letters, musical cards or create stories together.



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?
		
		
		
		

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 supporter

- Show the person you support the range of tools that are available for capturing life stories or life plans and ask them if they are interested in using any of these tools to show you and others why using technology is important to them.
- When you are planning what you will do each day or week with the person you are supporting, build in opportunities for them to share with you whether and how they would like to use technology.
- Work in partnership with the people you support, their 'in-home' supporters (e.g. parents, carers) and the organisation in which you work to find out what technologies the people you currently support are able to use and what technologies they might wish to learn to use in the future.

Case Study Example 8

A personal development worker demonstrates understanding of how the two people she supports have very different technology support needs

One of the people I support, she only needs 8 hours of support a week. She chooses to get them four hours one day and four hours another day. She is very, very clued up when it comes to technology. She uses it a lot in her own home. So she doesn't need a lot of technology-related support from us. The only thing we do is that she has a terrible memory so we text her to tell her that we were going to meet her that day, just so that she remembers that she is seeing somebody.

With the other person I support, he uses Instagram and Facebook. He is on the Internet a lot, looking up DJs and things of interest. Because he has difficulty reading, he often needs help to get into things. He gets quite frustrated if he can't do something immediately. So you have really got to talk him through things and say: 'no, no, it's saying this and its saying that', because otherwise he'll guess at what it is saying and it can cause him quite a lot of anxiety.

Case Study Example 9

A self-advocacy organisation demonstrate understanding of why someone is afraid to go online and what appropriate action they could take to gently change that position

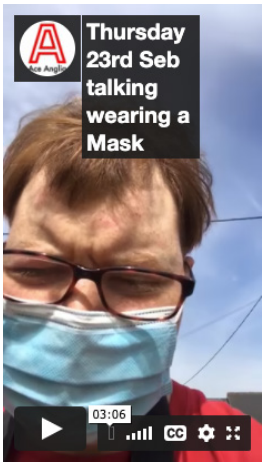
Well I think the pandemic has certainly prompted more people to want to get online, but there are still some who, well some people who find that difficult from a practical point of view and some people that just won't do it, are not persuaded. They don't want to be paying for the internet every month. I think that's an obstacle to some people.

One person I know rings us most days for a supportive chat, but he won't go online. He's had problems with debt in the past, so I think he's scared of committing to something and ending up in debt again. So we we've helped him set up an email account and now he goes to the library to access his email.

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

Resources to help you

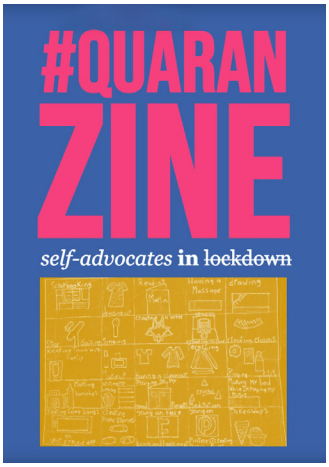
Sebs Week



Ace Anglia have hosted weekly blogs where people with learning disabilities used film to share what they have been up to. In this video blog, Seb shares how he talks to his friends on Zoom.

Link to blog

#Quaranzine. Self-advocates in Lockdown



This online magazine or 'zine' was produced by Jade French and a group of people with learning disabilities. It explores how they experienced the effects of the coronavirus pandemic between March and July 2020. Jessica shares how she has been supported by Zoom lessons with her Performance group and how she uses WhatsApp and Facetime to contact family and friends. Mac shares a video of him using a range of technologies.

Link to magazine

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?
		
		
		
		

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?
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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 them overcome these difficulties.

Suggested actions for supporters

- Source and read guides to using technologies (See' Resources to Help You' section).
- Ask the person you support what things they find easy and what things they find difficult about using technology.
- Ask the person you support if they have examples of ways that other people have successfully supported them to use technology in the past.
- Show the person you support the range of tools that are available for capturing life stories (See Toolkit for People with Learning Disabilities) and ask them if they are interested in using any of these methods to show you and others what the benefits of using technology are for them.
- Explore how to engage 'in-home' supporters such as parents and carers in working alongside you to facilitate technology use.
- Ask your manager and the organisation you work for to provide regular training and professional development opportunities to help you maintain and develop their technology related skills.
- Identify role models or 'digital champions' within the service you work for who are using technology with people with learning disabilities and ask if you can shadow them or be mentored by them to help you learn from their experiences.

Case Study Example 10

An Intensive Interaction Specialist Care Coordinator who works with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities shares what they have learnt about using Teams to run intensive interaction sessions

Sit close to the router, close down all other apps on your laptop, take a deep breath and make a strong cup of coffee. Have a go. It's not as bad as you think it might be, and there are some unexpected positives and plusses using technology here. I think if we can support people with learning disabilities to become used to it through exposure and repetition, it does open other doors. It's not just for our work, it can make social interactions in this way maintained. I thought of people with learning disabilities and people with dementia in care homes becoming more and more socially isolated, because of the pandemic, and if we can increase those skills then we maintain that community of social networks; and that's got to be a good thing.

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

Case Study Example 11

A college lecturer who teaches young adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities shares what they have learnt about using Zoom and how to engage students on Zoom

When you are using Zoom with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, you have got to understand your own screen. The world to the student and the world you are presenting is everything that you can see on the screen. You have got to make that screen live. You have got to give the students a reason to want to look at that screen. You do that by being a bigger version of yourself than you are in real life. You have got to be more expressive. When you are working with SLD and PMLD students, they don't do subtle, they need big. If you are performing on a little screen, you need big reactions, big expressions. And just make it fun. Get them to want to look at that screen. If they want to look at that screen and they want to interact with you, you can do anything.

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

Resources to help you

All about social media	Disability Wales produced a range of social media factsheets. This is an easy read version of these factsheets, hosted on the SeeAbility website.
A quick guide to WhatsApp	A straightforward guide to using WhatsApp produced by Learning Disability England.
How to Set up Microsoft Teams	An easy read guide produced by Ace Anglia on how to set up Microsoft Teams.
Tablet and Smartphone Icon Buster	A one-page explanation of the most common icons used on technology such as tablets and smartphones produced by the Building Bridges CIC. This version is hosted on the SeeAbility website.
Using Groups on WhatsApp	This is a video created by Sunderland People First and Media Savvy CIC about how to use WhatsApp, including how to safely use group chat features, send videos, and images.
Cue Cards for Video Meetings	Keepsafe have created some easy read cue cards using Photosymbols to help manage online meetings. This version is hosted on the Learning Disability England website.
Tutorial on how to use Zoom on a computer / Tutorial on how to use Zoom on a phone or tablet	People in Action, a charity in the Midlands that provides person centred care services for people in the community, have created two video tutorials that show you how to download and use Zoom on a computer or a phone.

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?
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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 supporters

- If, when you are supporting a person with a learning disability to use technology, it doesn't quite work out how you were both expecting, work with them to try and solve the problem.
- When you see other people with learning disabilities or their supporters using a piece of technology talk to them about what they have found easy or difficult. Ask them how they fixed any of the difficulties and share this with others that you work with and support.
- Seek opportunities in staff meetings and other organisational events to share your technology related experiences with team members.
- When you are planning how to provide technology related support, involve your managers and others you work with so that you can share ideas and also so that they can learn from you.

Case Study Example 12

A support service learns how you can sometimes solve technology problems with little tweaks

Because some of the tweaks are so tiny - but they make a massive difference. So the lady who was isolated in her residential home, she was able to join the dance session because somebody phoned a home staff member and said have you thought about doing this and they did it, and suddenly she has got a whole new world. It is not always big expensive things that make the difference, it is just the right targeted thing that can make a massive difference to someone's inclusion.

Case Study Example 13

An advocacy organisation learns how to provide support through the challenges that they have experienced

Getting the Internet set up for the person you are advocating for can

be difficult. It is a good little challenge as well, when you've got an adult with a learning disability who doesn't really speak much and gets confused easily. So I try and phone up the provider, they won't talk to me because obviously I'm not the customer - and yet they won't phone the customer to get permission, she needs to phone them. So if I said to her phone, or phone the company, they go all silent when they get through, they've forgotten what they're supposed to be doing, so there's all these kinds of challenges.

So there's been times where there's been two phones put next to one another and the person has given the company permission to speak to me! So again mobile phones have been fantastic because you can do all sorts of things with a mobile phone that you can't do with a landline, so that's all been going on well.

Case Study Example 15

A college lecturer learns how to support a student through shared problem-solving with the family

One of my students is very anxious. She got very stressed initially because on Zoom everybody is the same size and she can't see herself. On Google Meet she's a tiny little box in the corner and she got incredibly stressed, she thought we couldn't see her. So, her dad sent me some pictures of her making some stuff for cooking, so I put those up. Each week he'd send me pictures of her cooking and I'd put those up so that she could see herself on the screen. Even if it was just for five or 10 minutes of the class. So we'd all look at her pictures and what she'd made, so that she felt that she was there. So that was quite a barrier for her that it was different to Zoom and that she just thought we couldn't see her. Even though she could hear us, in her mind we couldn't. So that was a real struggle initially.

But as we went on, she got used to it. She was the only one that couldn't cook with me because they were in their living room and she had her mum and dad on either side of her. It was on a PC, so they couldn't put it in the kitchen. But as we went on, she was loving it and I made her my assistant. So even though everybody else was cooking, I was saying right Rosie, how many tomatoes do I need to use here and I would get her counting. And she's such a beaming woman, she loves to smile and the first couple of sessions she just looked close to tears. But as we moved on, she was just laughing as she would in the classroom. So it was just trying to make that connection and make them feel as if we are all in this together still. So for her I think she loved it and she was looking forward to her classes and she was laughing and doing all the normal things. So I think that's a really good example of getting over the barriers of the technology.

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

Resources to help you

How to use my computer my way

My Computer My Way

This is a guide produced by AbilityNet on individual adjustments that can be made to computers, laptops, tablets or smart phones to make them easier to use by disabled people.

Link to website

5 things to try if you can't hear someone on Zoom



This is a picture-based guide produced by Ace Anglia to help you problem solve audio issues with Zoom.

Link to infographic

Staying Safe Online



This is an easy-read guide written by Ace Anglia about how to stay safe when using Facebook, email, Skype and Twitter. It includes advice on how to deal with problems.

Link to PDF

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 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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