

CDP Update

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Snap Core First (Available for iOS and Windows)

Did you know that Snap Core First offers multiple different page sets for individuals with different needs? That's right, Snap Core First offers their original page set, Snap Core First, but they also offer a Text Page Set as well as an Aphasia Page Set! PODD and Gateway options are also available as in app purchases.



Let's talk Core: This page set offers a small set of flexible words such as want, not and go, that make up roughly 80% of what we all use in many daily situations. Core words are selected for maximum use in many environments, placed and ordered in a stable position for easier recall. The pageset also includes wordlists (sets of words that organize fringe vocabulary), quick fires (fast instant speaking messages), topics (specifically programmed for places or situations, like camping or work), and a keyboard (to foster literacy in those it's appropriate for). Core also offers [MANY, MANY resources](#) including the [Paths App](#).

Let's talk Text: This page set was designed for people transitioning from symbol supports to literacy. Language is organized by topics, and keyboards offer word prediction. In addition to Quick Fires, this page set also offers Phrases (an area to find commonly used messages), and a Dashboard (find utilities such as volume, battery, date, and smart speaker options). One additional feature is the 'notes' page where you can type information and messages to save and share by using the Copy button - REALLY handy for many of our clients. As with all Snap page sets, multiple selection method options are available. They include: Touch (enter or exit), Mouse dwell (Windows), Gaze (Windows), and Switch Scanning.



Let's Talk Aphasia: Includes a set of simple to use AAC tools that have been designed to help individuals with aphasia, their families, caregivers and therapists. Some of the key features include: Word Lists (groups of small, manageable words organized by categories and frequency of use), Whiteboard (a digital version of pen and paper - can be used for written keywords, drawings and photos), Rating Scales (tool for quick communication such as expressing pain or an opinion on a numeric/ visual scale), and Scripts (a customizable template for rehearsing routine conversations topics before they happen, or to speak out loud when it's hard to find the words to say).

There are many additional resources for the Aphasia Page Set found here: [RESOURCES](#)



PODD: is short for Pragmatic Organization Dynamic Display, which was created by SLP, Gayle Porter to offer people who can't speak a way to select and organize symbols to communicate. Snap Core PODD includes a collection of pages that allow the user to grow with the system. To learn more about PODD and the theory behind it, you can visit: <https://lindaburkhart.com/podd-information/>



Gateway: is an AAC language strategy created by SLP, Joan Bruno focused on core words. The Gateway add-on offers pages designed for different stages of language development. The pages are organized into Child Functional, Teen/ Adult Functional, Child Language and Literacy, Advanced Communicator, Text, Pro and Scanning Pro options. To learn more about Gateway, you can visit: www.gatewaytolanguageandlearning.com/



NeuroNode3

The Communication Devices Program was able to secure the purchase of 2 NeuroNode 3 EMG/ Spatial switches for use with our clients. These switches offer access in situations where we may not have been able to find a solution previously. The NeuroNode offers the clinician the ability to fine tune, with precise detail the signal that is traced via the EMG. This means that we can reduce the potential for accidental activations, and may decrease access fatigue.

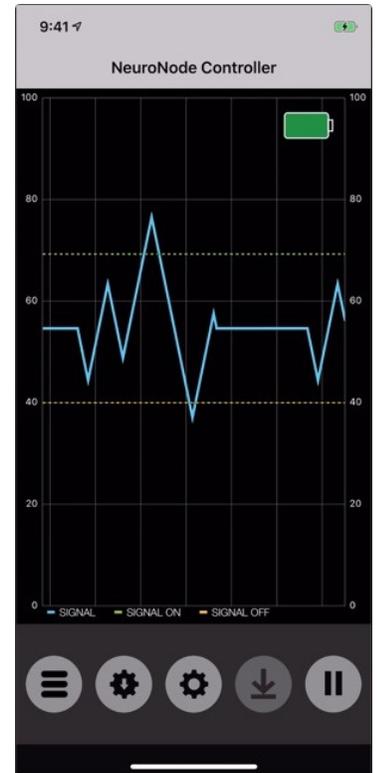
Some of the features of the NeuroNode that we really like include:

- It may offer access to individuals whom we have not been able to find a solution for in the past
- The ability to precisely fine tune the activation with the NeuroNode Controller App
- It offers real time EMG tracing to decrease the potential for accidental activations
- It is a non-invasive device that can be worn on the skin
- It can be used wirelessly (in certain situations)
- It is not affected by body position or light conditions
- It offers both Spatial Control and EMG capabilities
- It can be used on both Windows and iOS devices
- It connects via Bluetooth to the Speech Generating Device

The EMG (Electromyography) switch can be placed on pretty much any 'target' muscle that is able to respond, even minimally to a command to contract, and then be able to relax in a timely manner. This doesn't mean you have to see muscle movement for the device to pick up the signal. In this case, where you cannot see movement, it's always a good idea to start with a muscle that the individual had the most recent control of.

There are 3 electrode options, the single use individual electrodes, the single use triple electrodes and the reusable non-adhesive electrode.

The 3D Spatial control allows the device to track its location in space and create a switch based on that location. This means that we can use large or small voluntary movements to capture a switch activation. This switch works based on the X, Y, & Z axes of movement. The neat part about this option is that you can turn off the axes you aren't using, or that you want to ignore! This means that the switch should only take minimal effort to activate and you can filter extraneous movement.



Click the image below on the left for a Youtube video by Control Bionics outlining how the NeuroNode 3 works.



Contact the CDP to discuss options if you feel your client may be appropriate for the NeuroNode

Clinician's Corner

Communication Intermediaries



Police, legal and justice services must be communication accessible.

A Communication Intermediary (CI) assists victims, witnesses and accused people who have speech and language disabilities to understand questions and to communicate answers effectively when communicating with police, legal or justice professionals.

In Canada, a Communication Intermediary® holds a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology and has at least two years of clinical working experience. Additional CDAC trainings include information about the role of a CI; the CI model of service; communication assessment procedures; principles, practices and code of ethics for supporting communication within police, legal and justice situations.

CIs work in a similar way to sign language interpreters or language translators, however, they use different techniques to support people who have communication disabilities due to cerebral palsy, autism, cognitive disabilities, acquired brain injury, learning disability, stroke, dementia, ALS, Parkinson's Disease and other conditions.

CIs can provide the following services:

- Conduct a communication assessment to determine what the person needs to understand questions and to communicate their response. Assessment may involve investigating the person's understanding of different types of questions, time concepts, emotions and feeling words, and ability to tell a story. It might involve exploring the need for communication aids such as visual calendars, body maps, pictures and objects.
- Write a report on the person's communication abilities and documents any required communication aids and supports
- Explain the person's communication needs to justice professionals and what the person needs to communicate effectively within the justice process.
- When supporting a victim, witness or accused person in court, attend the Voir Dire to discuss ground rules and get the court's prior approval to use recommended communication strategies and aids
- Provide communication aides and direct communication support within all stages of the justice process. Examples include suggesting ways to ask questions that the person can understand, using strategies to maintain the person's attention and focus on a specific topic, providing visual supports to assist the person's to understand and respond to questions.



Communication Disabilities Access Canada

Communication Assistance Database

For more information about Communication Intermediaries, or for additional resources and videos please visit the CDAC Communication Intermediaries Website: <https://www.cdacanada.com/resources/access-to-justice-communication-intermediaries/>

To find a Communication Intermediary, please click on the image to the left or go to the CDAC Database here: <https://www.cdacanada.com/communication-assistance-database/>

ISAAC Canada - ISAAC CONNECT Conference Reminder

A friendly reminder for those of you interested in attending ISAAC Connect - Augmenting our Network. For those of you who maintain ASHA certification, you can get your Continuing Education Units at ISAAC! There are so many presentation categories that I don't have room for them all, but here's a glimpse; [Language and Literacy](#), [AAC Innovations](#), [Aphasia](#), [Assessment](#), [Unaided Communication](#), [Telepractice](#), [Health](#), [Identity](#), [Intimacy](#), [AAC Mentoring](#), [Access](#) and more!



Education and Resources - Research Opportunity!

Development of AAC Guidelines: ASC-AAC Study

[Accessibility Standards Canada](#) has sponsored the [Building and Designing Assistive Technology Lab](#) team to complete a study on what is important to ensure AAC systems can be used by the greatest number of people with ease of efficiency.

The Principle Investigators, [Dr. Clair Davies](#) (Department of Mechanical Engineering - Queen's University), [Dr. Beata Batorowicz](#) (School of Rehabilitation Therapy - Queen's University), and Project Manager, [Shane Pinder](#) (School of Rehabilitation Therapy - Queen's University) are developing recommendations and guidelines for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) to enable persons with motor, communication, and speech impairment to participate.

They are looking for volunteers to participate in focus groups or interviews concerning the development of guidelines to inform Canadian standards in AAC. As a participant in this study, you will be asked about the types of AAC with which you are familiar and your experiences in the use of AAC.

The study will take approximately two hours to answer questions in an individual or group setting about your interaction with AAC. In appreciation of your time, Accessibility Standards Canada will support participants with a \$100 gift card.

If you are interested, please email or call
Dr. Claire Davies, Claire.Davies@queensu.ca or
Dr. Beata Batorowicz, Beata.Batorowicz@queensu.ca.

Accessibility Standards Canada



Individuals who can participate in the study include:

- Someone who uses/ needs AAC technology
- Someone who works with people who use/ need AAC technology
- Someone who supports someone who uses/ needs AAC technology (i.e. parent, caregiver, aid, etc)
- Someone who provides people with AAC technology (i.e. teacher, OT, medical device vendor, etc)

For more detailed information please go to: <https://davies-bdat.weebly.com/letter-of-information.html>

P.S. Time is of the essence people!! If you are interested, please reach out ASAP.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan - [taken directly from website](#)

The Government of Canada is consulting Canadians on how to improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities. Your feedback will support the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will focus on:

- Reducing poverty among Canadians with disabilities
- Getting more persons with disabilities good quality jobs
- Helping met the *Accessible Canada Act* goal of a barrier-free Canada by 2040
- Making it easier for persons with disabilities to access federal programs and services
- Fostering a culture of inclusion

HOW to PARTICIPATE:

[Online Survey](#)

[Video Responses](#) (submit an ASL, or LSC video)



WHO can PARTICIPATE: ALL CANADIANS!

- Persons with a disability (PWD), caregivers or family members or organizations working with PWD
- Individuals identifying as First Nations, Inuk (Inuit), Métis or Indigenous
- Members of racialized groups, the LGBTQ2 community, or an official language minority community

Ability to discuss abuse and trauma

While it can be an uncomfortable topic for many, it is so important that individuals have access to a vocabulary that gives them the opportunity to discuss and/ or report any abuse or trauma. In a study by Togher, et al (2006) they suggest *“despite reports that people, particularly women, with a disability are at a greater risk for abuse than their nondisabled peers, there are few records of individuals with CCN [Complex Communication Needs] appearing in court or accessing legal services. This is a cause for concern given that people with intellectual or physical disabilities (or both) and CCN are estimated to be 2 -6 times more likely to suffer physical, mental, or sexual abuse than others in the community as a consequence of their inability to communicate effectively. This is a circular problem. As few cases are reported, the full extent of crimes against people who have CCN is not known”*.



The Victorian Government in Australia supported a project called [“Speak Up and be Safe”](#) which among a myriad of support, also provides [downloadable resources](#) including: [General](#), [Action](#), [Places](#) and [Things](#) Communication Boards, as well as Body Boards: Adult - [Female/ Male](#), Child - [Female/ Male](#). For individuals that are literate there are [QWERTY](#) and [ABCD](#) keyboard options available as well.

While these pages may not be appropriate for your client or all individuals, it’s important to consider and have the conversation about how an individual will communicate abuse if they ever need to.

In addition to being able to discuss and report abuse, it’s important to consider means to reduce the vulnerability often experienced by individuals with complex communication needs. Erin Sheldon, M.Ed. offered a presentation at AAC in the Cloud on this particular topic, titled Safeguards for AAC Users; vulnerability, autonomy, and being heard. Here are links to the [presentation slides](#) and the [Youtube video](#). In the presentation 10 strategies to reduce vulnerability are discussed, including: Teaching Privacy and Consent.

Teach privacy and consent

- Ask before touching AAC.
- Ask before checking message history.
- Ask before touching any part of the body.
- Teach a consistent way of expressing consent.
- Follow age-appropriate norms for discuss care and support needs.
- The least dangerous assumption is that the AAC learner requires the same privacy you do.

© AssistiveWare

AssistiveWare also has a short read about Reducing Vulnerability for AAC Users, you can find it [here](#).

What’s New in CDP

Communication Matters Pilot Project

The Communication Devices Program has approached the RCMP to collaborate on a Pilot Project titled “Communication Matters”. We will be bringing evidence-based research and the lived experience of having a Speech, Language Or Communication disorder to a small group of RCMP members. Our intention is to raise awareness about individuals in the community who may experience Speech, Language or Communication disorders, and to provide tips, strategies and tools that the RCMP members can use to increase the likelihood of having successful communication. Educational materials are currently being developed with the goal of providing education in the fall of 2021.

We are currently looking for individuals who may like to participate in the creation of material for the presentation. If you, or anyone you know with a Speech, Language or Communication Disability would like to act as a resource, participate in a survey, or provide a short video clip, please contact the CDP at 204-831-3430 or cdp@wrha.mb.ca. A survey about lived experiences is coming soon. Please stay tuned.

