Modelling Problem Solving

There can sometimes be some negative emotions around the use of AAC to communicate.

This can come from both AAC users and others around them.

It can be good for both AAC users and communication partners to see others making mistakes.

The fear and stress around doing the "wrong thing" can be a barrier to starting for some.

What are we modelling

Model making mistakes and how to fix them.

This shows:

- *It is ok to make a mistake*

- *It is possible to fix a mistake*

- *There are other ways to communicate if we can't find exact words*

How

Self-Talk

It is important to make the problem-solving process obvious to someone watching.

One way to do this is to say out loud that a mistake has been made and how it is being fixed.

People can talk about their own problem-solving, or the problem-solving of someone else (e.g., a character on a favourite TV show)

- *"Oops! I made a mistake!"*

- *"Bluey made a mistake. She is cleaning it up."*

- *"Delete that word!"*

Deleting a word or fixing a mistake

Sometimes people can get worried they might push the wrong button.

It can be helpful to show a mistake can be fixed by:

- *Deleting one word*

- *Clearing a whole sentence and start again*

Navigating somewhere different

Sometimes we find we've gotten into the wrong folder or turned to the wrong page for what we want.

Within different systems, it is good to know how to:

- *Go back a little way (maybe to the previous page)*

- *Go back to the home page and start again.*

Having a Plan B

Sometimes what we want to say is not available to us.

When this happens, we choose a different way to say it.

It can help to make the process of choosing another communication strategy obvious.

A visual like a Communication Toolbox can help talk about other ways you are going to communicate your message.

Exploring systematically

Try searching for words in systematic ways (e.g., down columns or across rows).

This helps find words, shows everyone how they can scan.

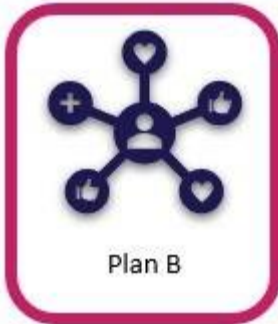*It also shows that it is ok to take extra time to search for words.*

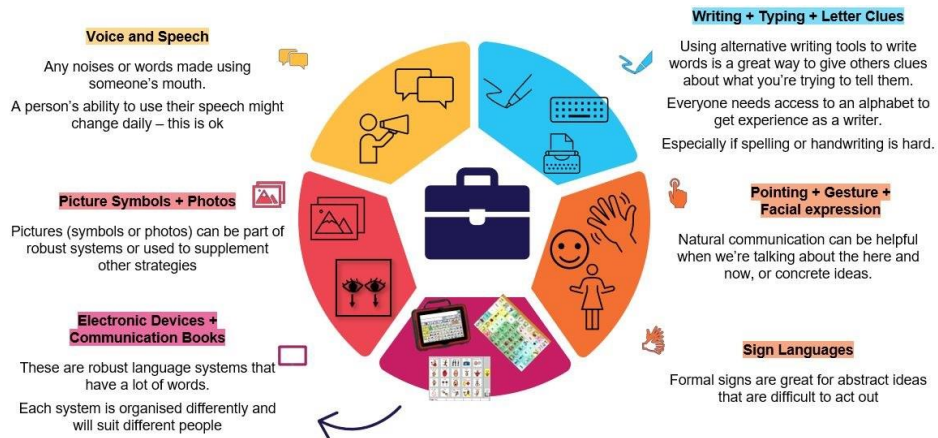Self-talk

Deleting or fixing
mistakes

Navigating
somewhere else

Plan B

Explore
systematically

Communication Toolbox

Voice and Speech

Any noises or words made using someone's mouth.

A person's ability to use their speech might change daily – this is ok

Writing + Typing + Letter Clues

Using alternative writing tools to write words is a great way to give others clues about what you're trying to tell them.

Everyone needs access to an alphabet to get experience as a writer.

Especially if spelling or handwriting is hard.

Picture Symbols + Photos

Pictures (symbols or photos) can be part of robust systems or used to supplement other strategies

Pointing + Gesture + Facial expression

Natural communication can be helpful when we're talking about the here and now, or concrete ideas.

Electronic Devices + Communication Books

These are robust language systems that have a lot of words.

Each system is organised differently and will suit different people

Sign Languages

Formal signs are great for abstract ideas that are difficult to act out

Plan to problem-solve with AAC

It can be helpful to think ahead about how to show someone that it is ok to make mistakes and how they can be fixed.

For each communication system used, it might be helpful to think about

1. *What problem solving strategy to focus on now*

2. *What will it look like*

3. *What will be said*

Mistakes don't need to be deliberately or artificially made, but communication partners may need encouragement to be open about their own learning.

For more information

For more information visit our website: Telethon: Country Kids Communicate (indigosolutions.org.au)[1]

Download this as a PDF document: Modelling Problem Solving[2]

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