

Orlando, Florida + Virtual



AAC Specialty Certification: Competencies and Ethics

American Board of Augmentative and
Alternative Communication

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AAC Clinical Competency Domains and Ethical Considerations
American Board of Augmentative and Alternative Communication
January 29, 2022 from 8:00-9:00 AM

Speaker Disclosure



Learning Objectives



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Financial: Jennifer Drenchek-Cristiano is the owner of Technology for Education and Communication Consulting Inc. Mrs. Cristiano is also an adjunct faculty member at Stockton University in New Jersey.

Non-Financial: Jennifer Drenchek-Cristiano holds a volunteer position on the American Board for AAC Specialty Certification (AB-AAC).

Mike Cole M.S. CCC-SLP

Financial: Mike is President of Use Your Words, P.C. private practice

Non-Financial: Mike holds a voluntary position on the American Board for AAC Specialty Certification (AB-AAC)

1. Participants will be able to identify at least 3 SGD Rules of Commitment for funding.
2. Participants will learn at least 3 competencies in AAC necessary to provide quality evaluation, funding submission, and intervention.
3. Participants will list 3 ways AAC Specialty Certification is preparing to assist in providing competent AAC evaluation and intervention.

- Virtual Presentation Survey

- Your feedback is very important to us. Please be sure to complete the survey after the presentation. You will be automatically redirected to the survey at end of the presentation. Upon completion of the survey, your certificate of completion will be posted to your learner profile.

- CEUs

- ATiA 2022: AT Connected education presentations are ACVREP, AOTA, ASHA, CRC and IACET CE approved. Please note that sessions are reviewed for specialty CEU eligibility, but not all sessions are approved for specialty CEUs.
- You will receive a CEU Certificate after submitting an Assessment. The certificate will be posted to your learner profile. You may submit more than one Assessment for different CEUs for the same education session e.g. ASHA and IACET.

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Five SGD Funding Rules of Commitment

- Rule 1 : Be committed to following your professional code of ethics, scope of practice, and ASHA policy documents
- Rule 2 : Be committed to conducting a comprehensive AAC evaluation to gather evidence required for SGD funding.
- Rule 3 : Be committed to a fair and unbiased SGD trial process independent of the funding source.
- Rule 4: Be committed to fully informing the client and family of the comprehensive range of AAC intervention options during the evaluation.
- Rule 5 : Fully disclose potential conflicts of interest regarding financial and non-financial relationships.

Higdon, Hill (2015)

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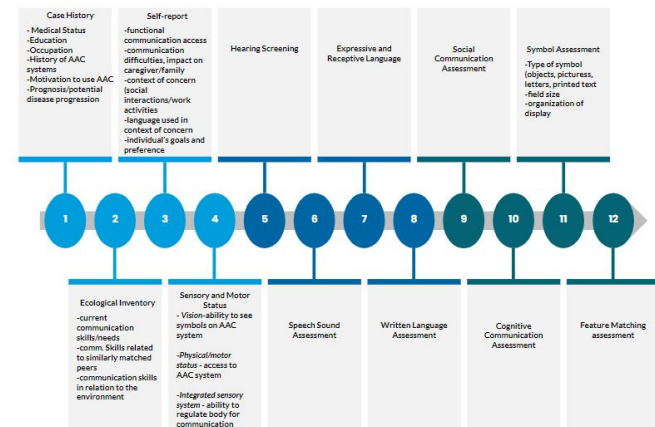
Be committed to following your professional code of ethics, scope of practice, and ASHA policy documents

- AAC requires a robust knowledge and skill set, if not mentored experience
- ASHA expects clinicians to engage only in those aspects of service consistent with their level of education, training and experience
- AAC is a unique clinical area of service delivery for SLP's because clients with severe communication disorders, families, and other professionals including physicians have turned to the SLP to make decisions about the recommendation of AAC interventions and technology that may result in purchasing or funding an SGD.

Higdon, Hill (2015)

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Rule 2 : Be committed to conducting a comprehensive AAC evaluation to gather evidence required for SGD funding.



Rule 3 : Be committed to a fair and unbiased SGD trial process independent of the funding source.



- Commitment to conducting a comprehensive AAC evaluation (Rule 2) and involving the individual and family as partners in the SGD selection process (Rule 4) will provide the external, clinical, and personal evidence needed for fair and unbiased SGD trials.
- The SLP must function independently, be in charge of the situation, and not allow the AAC manufacturer to perform the evaluation. SGD trial data collection, data analysis, and written interpretation of trial results for any reports are completed by the SLP.

Higdon, Hill (2015)

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Rule 4 : Be committed to a fair and unbiased SGD trial process independent of the funding source.



- The client and family need to be involved in the technology selection process.
- The information base of the client and family needs to be built.
- Client and family must be informed about:
 - The range of features of SGD's
 - implications of selecting one type of SGD over another
 - Consequences of the choice affecting short and long term outcomes

Higdon, Hill (2015)

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Rule 5 : Fully disclose potential conflicts of interest regarding financial and non-financial relationships.



- Each evaluation must contain a signature of assurance statement requires that the signing SLP is confirming that they independently performed the evaluation, wrote the SGD funding request, and "is not an employee of and does not have a financial relationship with the supplier of the SGD."
- SLPs should not sign or submit the SGD funding request if they did not conduct the evaluation and write the report being submitted for funding.

Higdon, Hill (2015)

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Process for Developing Competency Domains and Competency Statements



- Competency development subcommittee was established
- Pool of volunteers for subcommittee was balanced for:
 - practice sites
 - geographical location
 - ethnicity
 - Years of experience
- Qualtrics survey developed
- A psychometrician affirmed the process toward standardization
- Additional volunteers

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1. Professionalism
2. Assessment and Diagnosis
3. Development and Implementation of a treatment plan
4. Design and Use of AAC Technology
5. Leadership, collaboration, and education



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- Maintain the highest level of ethics and professionalism to provide services without preference, conflict of interest, or bias, as well as remain informed of research and evidence-based practices in the area of AAC evaluation intervention, and help advance knowledge base related to AAC.

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- Conduct a comprehensive, interprofessional assessment utilizing evidence and research based practices to evaluate the individual's communication abilities in order to design a communication system on a continuum of no-technology to high-technology supports.

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- Construct evidence-based treatment plans to assist diverse stakeholders in establishing and implementing measurable goals for individuals with complex communication needs (CCNs).

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- Design, evaluate, and innovate technology solutions to customize integrated systems to optimize communication for individuals with complex communication needs (CCNs).

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- Advocate, education, and awareness on the use of AAC among stakeholders and the community to facilitate and foster AAC across the lifespan.

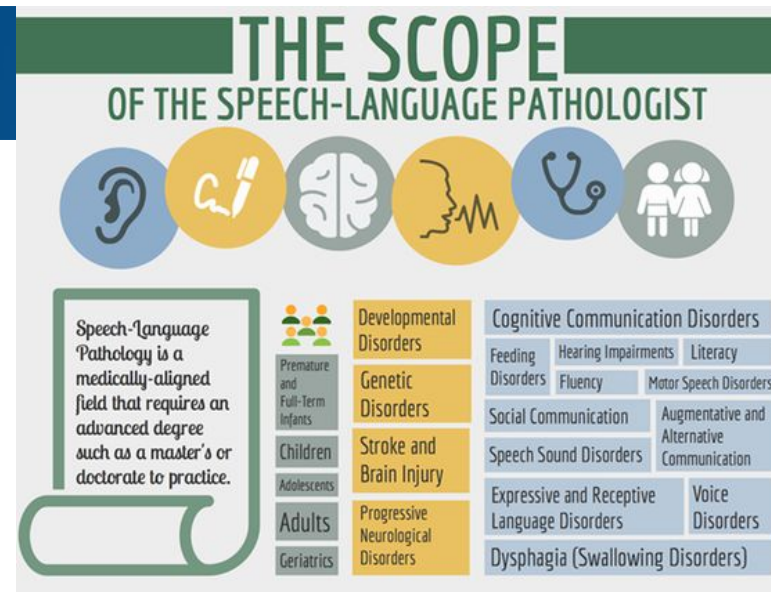
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What's next?

- Send out Qualtrics survey
- Based on feedback:
 - Competencies will be evaluated for validity and importance
- Psychometrician involved in the process
 - Based off of data collected from survey, would determine if changes need to be made to the domains or competency statements
- Once finalized, that information will be used for the development of the assessment and portfolio

SLP's help
people
with...

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A wide scope of practice offers many opportunities to help a wide variety of people, but ethical concerns can arise...

SLPs can be under-trained in the area of AAC

Myriad of AAC choices and commercial nature of AAC complicates:

- Evaluation
- Implementation

SLPs can become over reliant on vendors for:

- Evaluation
- Decision Making
- Treatment Plans

SLPs can become over reliant on Social Media

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- To provide opportunity for practitioners to specify the nature of the evidence-based AAC clinical practice they deliver
- To offer resources for Board Certified Speech Language Pathologist Specialists' lifelong learning
- To administer an efficient certification program for specialists in the clinical practice for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

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The process for achieving Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Specialty Certification is under way!

Unique area within ASHA scope of practice

Special set of expertise required for:

- funding
- procurement
- implementation

What is it?

- Mentorship program
- Guidance for continuing education

(hill, K., 2018)



- Fielded on January 13, 2016
- sent to 4,111 current ACHA sig 12 members
- 1,507 Respondents



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Response	Percentage	Number
Very challenging	52.1	741
Somewhat challenging	38.5	548
Somewhat easy	5.4	77
Very easy	1.3	18
I don't know	2.7	39



How challenging is it to find a well-trained speech-language pathologist to work with in your community?

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Response	Percentage	Number
Yes	82.7	1,179
No	5.5	79
I don't know	11.7	167



Do you think there should be clinical specialty certification in AAC?

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Assistive Technology Industry Association White Paper



- Would like to know more about the range of AT and AAC devices and services: 86%
- There are not enough AT and AAC-Competent SLPs: 10% believed there are sufficient ranks of SLPs with AT and AAC knowledge to meet the needs of consumers
- SLPs do not receive adequate education in AT and AAC : 74% feel they lack adequate preparation for AT and AAC in school
- SLPs desire more knowledge about AT and AAC, especially in the realm of new technologies such as tablet computers. More than 90% of respondents want more information about tablets, and their potential role in AT and AAC treatment.
- In terms of remediating AT and AAC knowledge gaps in the profession, SLPs favor a mix of pre-service curriculum modifications, more continuing education opportunities, and increased mentorship.

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Assistive Technology Industry Association White Paper Solutions



- ASHA is encouraged to make AT and AAC a priority and collaborate with ATiA on offering a rich curriculum for continuing education as well as curriculum guidance for degree program
- Effect modifications in graduate school curricula
- Provide more continuing education and conference opportunities
- Facilitate mentoring as a path to AT and AAC proficiency

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How is AAC Specialty Certification Preparing to Assist SLPs to Ethically Meet the Needs of Individuals who Require AAC?



- Clinical specialty certification enables an SLP or AUD with advanced knowledge, skills, and experience beyond the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) to be formally identified as a Board Certified Specialist (BCS) in a specific area of clinical practice.

[ASHA Clinical Specialty Certification](#)

- The BCS designator helps consumers easily identify professionals who have advanced skills in a certain specialty area

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When will the Specialty Certification in AAC be active?



- The timeline has been adjusted
 - Initially set for 2023
 - Now targeted for 2024
- Pandemic related issues
 - Due to work adjustments
 - Vendor and consultant offices shutting down
 -



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Can I still practice AAC without Specialty Certification?



YES!

- Specialty Certification is not required to practice in any area within the Audiology or Speech-Language Pathology Scopes of Practice

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American Board of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Disorders (AB-AAC) Operational Manual Outline



- Introduction
- Membership: Affiliates Eligibility
- Application Process
- Examination Process
- Maintenance and Renewal Application



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- Governance: Board Members
 - consumer board
 - executive board
- Operations - duties of the board
- Procedures of the board
- Standing committees
- Fiscal responsibilities of the board
- Appeals process

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- Major Competency Domains Survey will be coming out 2022
 - Opportunity to provide feedback regarding major competency domains
- Completion of the operations manual and application manual
- Analysis of major competency domains survey
- Organization of mentorship program
- Establishment of portfolio
- Website will be updated



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Website: <http://aacspecialist.org>

E-mail: info@aacspecialist.org

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Assistive Technology Industry Association (2011). *The critical need for Knowledge and Usage of AT and AAC Among Speech Language Pathologists* [White Paper].
<https://www.atia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ATIA-SLP-Survey-2011.pdf>

Higdon, C.W., and Hill, K. (2015). Five SGD Funding Rules of Commitment. *Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication* (vol. 24), 129-134.

Hill, K., (2018). *Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Specialty Certification Application, Stage II*. Typescript.

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Would you like your voice to be counted?



Request for Major Competency
Domain Survey



Request to participate in Operations
Manual Development

