**Trials and Tribulations; adapting service delivery for better outcomes in Alternative and Augmentative Communication**

With the introduction of the NDIS, families are looking for assistive technology (AT) options that are both successful and cost-effective. Research has shown that there is a high rate of AT abandonment due to a range of factors, including; anxiety around its use, lack of training, and lack of involvement in choosing.

ComTEC’s aim was to investigate how these factors could be addressed by adapting the service delivery model, leading to greater confidence in choosing Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems.

The basis for this exploration came from clinical experience in a specialist AT state-wide service along with a review of current literature. Three different questionnaires were used to collect feedback on themes exploring trials of AT, training, and confidence levels in using AT. Questionnaire respondents included parents of children who use AAC, as well as therapists and clients that have used ComTEC’s advisory services and equipment library.

Initial findings reinforced the previous research and highlighted the need for longer device trials as well as greater access to training on a number of platforms, including online and face-to-face. Furthermore the level and extent of training was influential to increasing confidence levels and usage. This was demonstrated by respondents strongly agreeing that online and on-demand implementation training was useful and led to increased confidence levels in supporting their child to use AAC.

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