


Turn on the Power  
– training direct care staff in AAC  
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**Inclusive Communication And Behaviour Support (ICABS)**

- This training program was designed to improve communication between people with a disability and direct care staff in supported accommodation units;
- Training program was modified by DADHC and used with permission from the Victorian Department of Human Services (VDHS); and
- The NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care has invested over \$2 million in training over 2,000 staff from 217 group homes and respite centres and 40 large residential centre units in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) since a pilot was conducted in 2004/2005.

**Inclusive Communication And Behaviour Support (ICABS)**



The key objectives of the training program were to provide direct care staff with the skills to:

- Understand, recognise and record the unique communication behaviours, skills and abilities of clients and determine the each clients' communication as symbolic, intentional informal or unintentional;
- Understand and recognise the communication skills of the partners;
- Recognise the communication skills used and ones that would be possible to include within the environment;
- Use consistent current terminology to describe communication skills; and
- Apply a range of communication strategies for the client. For example, the use of personal communication dictionaries (PCD's), chat books, all about me books, touch cues, Key Word Signs and gestures, object symbol and multisensory environments (MSE).

The key modifications to the ICABS model were:

- ICABS manual - NSW version;
- Two day training with a follow-up session in the workplace;
- Resource packs provided to each unit trained, including
  - *prAACtically speaking* (1996)
  - *Triple C: Checklist of Communication Competencies* (1999)
  - *InterAACtion* (2004)
  - *Makaton Vocabulary* (2001) book
- - *Key Word Sign* (2002)
- *All About Me cdrom* (2000);
- A signed ICABS certificate for staff who attended the 2 day training, completed work tasks and a project task; and
- Quality Presenters, who were also Makaton Presenters.

Summary of an internal evaluation of the 2005/06 ICABS training program:

- six fewer assaults recorded in units where staff were trained;
- a reduction in workers compensation claims relating to client aggression from 70% to 22%;
- over 80% response rate to the feedback survey;
- overwhelmingly staff said the training had helped them to assist and support clients to become more involved in their home and community;
- the training has also helped staff to think about and influence their clients' communication environment and gave staff more confidence in recognising and responding to clients' communication;

Summary of an internal evaluation of the 2005/06 ICABS training program – continued:

- staff strongly felt the training had given them the skills and knowledge that would be useful in their career, would provide more confidence in their ability to do their job and to a lesser extent, be more positive about staying in their job;
- 97% of respondents said that they would recommend the training to others; and
- as at January 2007, 85% of the 119 staff were still employed at the same house and/or cluster. The evaluation compared the pre and post training period for incidents of assault (both involving staff and/or clients), workers compensation claims and staff retention rates.

ICABS Participant Evaluation Feedback 2005/09:  
Immediately after the 2 day workshop N = 1,908

The majority answered either AGREE or AGREE STRONGLY for:

- This training increased my understanding of this topic
- I would be likely to change my behaviour or actions at work
- I would like more opportunity to learn more about this topic
- I found the course materials easy to use and follow
- I will refer back to the course materials to help me in my job
- I will share the course materials with other people at work
- The trainers helped me understand the information presented
- I had an opportunity to participate in discussions
- The trainer understood the topic/material
- The trainer was open to question regarding the topic

ICABS Participant Evaluation Feedback 2005/09:  
Immediately after the 2 day workshop N = 1,908

Themes were developed from the answers given to the seven open ended questions

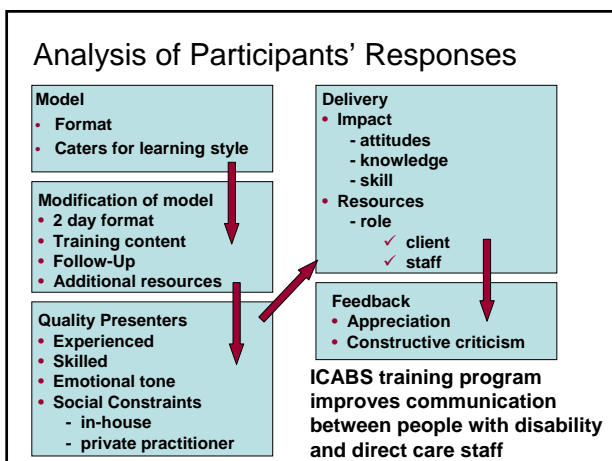
- n1728 - The most enjoyable part of the course was ....
- n1651- Parts of the course that are very important to me or my workplace include...
- n1652 - The things I learnt in the course that I will most likely use at work are...
- n764 - The bits I didn't like about the course were...
- n530 - The parts of the course I didn't feel were relevant to me or my workplace were...
- n1050 - Something that surprised me or I was aware of before the course...
- n1120 - I would like to know more about...

ICABS Participant Evaluation Feedback 2005/09:  
8-12 weeks Post workshop N = 766

Six questions from the ICABS Project Task Evaluation form.

The majority answered either AGREE or AGREE STRONGLY for:

- This training helped me to assist clients to become involved in life
- The training has given me skills and knowledge that will be useful
- The training made me think about and influence my clients' communication environment
- Since the training I feel more confident in recognising and responding to my clients' communication
- Since the training I am more positive about continuing in my job
- 100% recommended the training to others
- n479 – Additional Comments....



Model

- *I found the training to be extremely informative and a pleasure to participate in. The trainers were very helpful and I felt that they put a lot of thought and effort into the training plan and format.*
- *One of the most well presented inclusive training schedules I have completed. Great support fro discussion within training. Enthusiastic presenters and easy access for any questions afterwards. Great food.*

**Modification of model**

- *Will be great to see trainers in eight weeks for feedback on projects.*
- *Follow up visits and support, personal resources.*
- *Putting the right terminology in place.*
- *I believe that I can do the course with experience in communication strategies but it has helped me to mentor and train existing and new staff.*

**Quality Presenters**

- *Trainers all friendly made you feel comfortable.*
- *Very well presented, by presenters who know what they were talking about*
- *Enthusiasm and knowledge of trainer.*
- *Fantastic training very informative but fun and relaxed at the same time. The trainers did a great job.*


**Delivery**

- *Understanding the need for better communication with my clients.*
- *It has opened my eyes and made me aware that "Yes" everyone is able to communicate in some way.*
- *I believe that staff and residents have benefited as a result of this training. Having a project to complete was a wonderful way of staff taking ownership of these new skills we have developed and been provided with. The training was very well presented and most of all, very enjoyable. Thanks for the feedback on our ICABS projects.*

**Feedback**


- *Very relevant course.*
- *Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the programme. I have enjoyed doing the task and love the opportunity to refocus on client needs.*
- *I felt a lot was not so relevant to me. A lot of the ICABS aimed at non-verbal clients, where as the clients I work with are verbal and proficient communicators.*
- *Most of the course is designed for group homes. I work at a respite centre.*
- *Future training - Makaton, Auslan, Communication*

**Case Studies – Project Tasks**

 **Activity Box**  
Hunter – Hunter Residences


A clear plastic box was filled with a range of interesting items. All items were chosen for their sensory properties.

A folder with strategies for the communication partner, a monitoring chart with comments on the use of the box and suggestions for other items that can be included in the box.



Items included:  
*a variety of different textured shapes, pimple ball, koosh balls, stress balls, slinky, tambourines and plastic snakes.*

**RESULT: A decrease in outbursts and self injurious behaviour when items from the box were given to the client.**




### Shopping Program Northern – Mid North Coast

Carefully selected shopping items were chosen. The key items were chosen and a pictorial representation provided. This could be a part of the wrapper (remnant) or a photo from a shopping catalogue. Each page opening includes the remnant on the left hand side and the supermarket aisle number. On the other page there is a number instructing the client how many to purchase. As the client does not have numeracy skills, above "1", then there will be four "1"s to represent "4" items to be purchased. The client can now shop independently.

Book contains:

•Instruction page	<i>UHT milk</i>
•Dishwashing tablets	<i>Laundry powder</i>
•Toilet tissue	<i>Disinfectant</i>
•Wholemeal bread	<i>Cheese slices</i>
	<i>Baked beans</i>




**RESULT: A small booklet with instructions and information for successful shopping.**

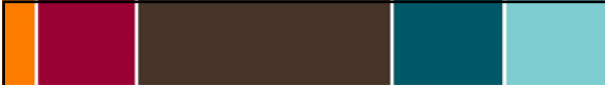


### Footy Tipping Folder Western – Riverina Murray


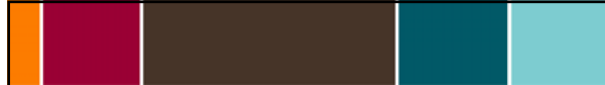
An A4 sized fabric ring binder folder with teams represented by their logos. For each day of the week each game/games are represented and a logo representing whether the game is on TV or the radio. Weekly draws have been downloaded from the NRL website to guide staff. In conjunction with this aid, the client has commenced in a local Pub tipping competition. His tips and results are stored in the folder as well. The client will chat about football with staff who previously didn't know about NRL. The client now also visits the Pub to have a drink and check where he is up to with the tipping competition.






**RESULT: What an excellent result - this client is now communicating with more people about a topic he loves!**



### Sensory Pillow





### Object Symbols

- Activity Box / Arch / Frame / Bag
- Leisure Pack
- All About Me
- Chat books
- Community Access
- Community Request cards
- Chores chart
- Cooking Program
- Footy Tipping
- Key Word Sign
- Objects
- Personal Communication Dictionary
- Routine / Time tables / Schedules
- Sensory Cushion / Sensory Boxes
- Shopping Program
- Touch Cues
- Who's here today

**ICABS  
Project Tasks  
2004 – 2009**



### ICABS Resources

- ICABS manual soon available for download from the Victorian Department of Human Services website <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability>
- CHCDIS411A - Communicate using augmentative and alternative communication strategies
- Felicity Burke  
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