



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# **CHCDIS411A Communicate using augmentative and alternative communication strategies**

**Release: 1**

## **CHCDIS411A Communicate using augmentative and alternative communication strategies**

### **Modification History**

Not Applicable

### **Unit Descriptor**

#### **Descriptor**

This unit describes the knowledge and skills required by the worker to communicate with people who have complex communication needs (CCN) through effective use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies and systems

Augmentative and alternative refers to methods that replace or supplement speech to address the needs of people whose oral speech skills limit their ability to meet their participation and communication needs

### **Application of the Unit**

#### **Application**

Work performed requires a range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required and individuals will take responsibility for their own outputs

Note that application of this unit may vary according to signs/language used in specific geographical areas or for participants working with specific CALD groups

### **Licensing/Regulatory Information**

Not Applicable

### **Pre-Requisites**

Not Applicable

## Employability Skills Information

### Employability Skills

This unit contains Employability Skills

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements define the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

The Performance Criteria specify the level of performance required to demonstrate achievement of the Element. Terms in italics are elaborated in the Range Statement.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

### ELEMENT

### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1. Identify the current *communication* ability and needs of the person

- 1.1 Work in collaboration with relevant others to identify the communication needs of person with a disability
- 1.2 Use appropriate tools to identify the level of their current communication ability, in line with own work role and organisation requirements
- 1.3 Document the outcomes of this process in line with organisation procedures
- 1.4 Identify the need to consult with additional people including family members
- 1.5 Make appropriate referrals to *professionals and other service providers* as required

2. Develop effective *augmentative and alternative communication strategies*

- 2.1 Apply understanding of *augmentative and alternative communication*
- 2.3 Develop communication strategies to meet individual needs and level of communication
- 2.4 Take into account the person's history and preferences when developing communication strategies
- 2.5 Adjust available tools and programs to address individual needs and preferences
- 2.6 Seek advice from other staff and relevant others

## ELEMENT

## PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

3. Implement augmentative and alternative communication strategy
  - 3.1 Demonstrate the use of *different strategies and devices* in augmentative and alternative communication
  - 3.2 Apply understanding of participation model as a communication strategy
  - 3.3 Document communication strategies in the person's communication support plan or person-centred plan
  - 3.4 Organise the environment to *optimise communication opportunities*
  - 3.5 Reinforce communication by timely and appropriate response
  - 3.6 Identify difficulties experienced by the person communicating and respond to difficulties within own work role and responsibilities
  - 3.7 Communicate difficulties outside own role and responsibilities to *appropriate person*
  - 3.8 Contribute to consistent use of the communication strategy by following established directions, by providing information and training and by maintaining contact with *other users* or support persons
  - 3.9 Set up and maintain recording system to assist with *monitoring and review*
  
4. Monitor, report and review communication strategies
  - 4.1 Review recordings to monitor success of communication strategies and make changes as required
  - 4.2 Identify *barriers* to the effective use of augmentative and alternative communication strategies and devices
  - 4.3 Work with *other relevant people* to overcome the barriers
  - 4.4 Implement any modifications to communication strategies and devices
  - 4.5 Identify opportunities to increase communication vocabulary
  - 4.6 Maintain records according to established directions and within organisation protocols

## Required Skills and Knowledge

### REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level required for this unit.

#### *Essential knowledge:*

The candidate must be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

These include knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of augmentative and alternative communication
- The process for assessing for the use of augmentative and alternative communication
- Understanding of the different levels of communication
- Recognition of communication styles of individuals
- Different communication skills relevant to client group e.g. signing
- Basic knowledge of causes of communication impairment
- Cross cultural communication protocols
- Understanding of the influence of communication on behaviour
- Understanding of the person's communication level and its impact on skill development
- Understanding of the person's communication level and its impact on their active community participation
- Roles and functions of different professionals in the development, implementation and maintenance of augmentative and alternative communication strategies and devices
- Available range of communication aids and their correct use
- Augmentative and alternative communication strategies and their correct use for the person's level of communication
- The total communication environment and the need for consistency
- Role and responsibility as part of a team that supports augmentative and alternative communication
- Task analysis
- Prompting, principles of prompting and fading prompting
- Strategies to create independence
- Reinforcers
- Motivators to learn
- Common de-motivators and blocks
- Understanding of maintenance techniques and generalisation
- Understanding of incidental learning

## **REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

### *Essential skills:*

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Participate in a multi-disciplinary team
- Follow established augmentative and alternative communication strategy interaction guidelines
- Use augmentative and alternative communication strategies and devices
- Respond appropriately to each individual's augmentative and alternative communication strategy
- Identify barriers to effective communication using augmentative and alternative communication strategies/devices
- Monitor effective communication using augmentative and alternative communication strategies/aids
- Use observation skills
- Apply techniques to work with specialists and relevant others
- Use effective communication skills including:
  - development of rapport
  - active listening
  - make reasonable adjustments to own communication techniques to meet individual needs
- Collaborate and network with a variety of personnel in order to achieve learning and development objectives
- Demonstrate appropriate task breakdown
- Apply communication techniques that encourage and motivate
- Use appropriate prompting and application of reinforcers during training session
- Demonstrate appropriate use of incidental learning opportunities

## **Evidence Guide**

### **EVIDENCE GUIDE**

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the Performance Criteria, Required Skills and Knowledge, the Range Statement and the Assessment Guidelines for this Training Package.

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

*Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate this unit of competency:*

- The individual being assessed must provide evidence of specified essential knowledge as well as skills
- The individual being assessed must demonstrate the use of five different strategies/aids used for AAC in a range of different environments
- Assessment of this unit must occur in a real or simulated workplace  
Such an environment must provide a typical range of augmentative and alternative communication requirements
- The specific assessment context will be defined by the workplace
- Where, for reasons of safety, space, or access to equipment and resources, assessment takes place away from the workplace, the assessment environment should represent workplace conditions as closely as possible
- The competencies described need to be assessed over time and events, under normal workplace conditions
- Assessment should not require a higher level of communication competency than that required by work responsibilities

*Access and equity considerations:*

- All workers in community services should be aware of access, equity and human rights issues in relation to their own area of work
- All workers should develop their ability to work in a culturally diverse environment
- In recognition of particular issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, workers should be aware of cultural, historical and current issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Assessors and trainers must take into account relevant access and equity issues, in particular relating to factors impacting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients and communities

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

*Context of and specific resources for assessment:*

- This unit can be assessed independently, however holistic assessment practice with other community services units of competency is encouraged
- Resources required for assessment of this unit include access to:
  - a relevant workplace or an appropriately simulated environment where assessment may take place

*Method of assessment:*

- In cases where the learner does not have the opportunity to cover all relevant aspects in the work environment, the remainder should be assessed through realistic simulations, projects, previous relevant experience or oral questioning on 'What if?' scenarios
- Assessment of this unit of competence will usually include observation of processes and procedures, oral and/or written questioning on Essential knowledge and skills and consideration of required attitudes
- Where performance is not directly observed and/or is required to be demonstrated over a 'period of time' and/or in a 'number of locations', any evidence should be authenticated by colleagues, supervisors, clients or other appropriate persons

## Range Statement

### RANGE STATEMENT

The Range Statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Add any essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts.



## **RANGE STATEMENT**

*Augmentative and alternative communication includes:*

- Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is used to increase understanding of spoken language and to augment or supplement expression
- AAC systems comprise communication aids, symbols, strategies and techniques or methods
- AAC systems include both aided and unaided strategies, including access techniques

*Communication refers to the manner in which the meaning of a message is transmitted/ received, and includes:*

- Unaided using, for example:
  1. natural gestures
  2. facial expression
  3. eye contact
  4. vocalisation
  5. key word signs - Makaton vocabulary
- Aided where the person communicates using a communication aid (i.e. something other than their body), such as:
  - real objects
  - photographs
  - line drawings
  - communication aids, such as 'Chat Books', 'Personal Communication Dictionaries', 'Books About Me'
  - electronic device with speech output

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Communication symbol refers to a system of representing meaning:*

- When people speak, their meaning is represented by spoken words which act as 'symbols'
- Where a person is unable to speak, their meaning has to be represented by a different set of symbols
- These communication symbols include:
  - spoken words - traditional orthography (letters/ words)
  - photographs
  - pictographs / line drawings - set of pictorial symbols (e.g. picture communication symbols, boardmarkers, softpics, compics)
  - written text - key word signs - also termed 'symbolic language' as the sign represents a concept
  - key word signs - Makaton vocabulary, etc
  - manual signs

*Communication strategies refer to:*

- Strategies for initiating and maintaining an interaction with a communication partner
- A specific way of using communication strategies within everyday situations, including, for example:
  - community request card for shopping
  - personal communication dictionary of idiosyncratic signs

*Communication access refers to:*

- A means of access - technique
- Addresses the method of transmitting messages, such as:
  - scanning
  - eye gaze
  - auditory scanning
  - via a keyboard, pointed index finger or switching
- Communication strategies / devices may range from high technology (use of computers and voice output communication devices) through to pointing with a fist to a communication board

## RANGE STATEMENT

- Understanding AAC systems may include:*
- Choice, selection and use of a symbol system and appropriate communication strategy/device
  - Being an effective communication partner by being familiar with a range of AAC strategies/devices
  - Being familiar with range of strategies required to implement a system effectively

- Assessment tools include:*
- Observation checklists such as Checklist of Communication Competence
  - Assessment tools specific to the organisation
  - Assessment tools specified by the specialist

- Professionals and other service providers may include:*
- Speech pathologist
  - Psychologist
  - Carer/family
  - Education staff
  - Support staff
  - Occupational therapist

- Different strategies and devices may include, but are not limited to:*
- Chat books
  - Choice making using object symbols
  - Choice making using photos or line drawings
  - Choice making using real life experiences
  - Community request cards
  - Finger spelling
  - Head wand or head stick
  - Icon
  - Large print
  - Leisure pack
  - Key word signing - Makaton vocabulary
  - Mime
  - Personal communication dictionary
  - Activity Sequence Boards
  - Picture exchange communication system (PECS)
  - Voice output communication aids (VOCA)

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Monitoring and review include:*

- Observations made by self or others
- Reviewing documentation detailing use of communication strategy/strategies as described in communication support plan
- Informal and formal discussions with client and relevant others regarding effectiveness of communication strategy
- Client planning meetings

*Appropriate information may include:*

- Essential communication requirements in a specific setting, including:
  - work
  - school
  - home
  - day service
  - shops
- Communication barriers in a specific setting, including:
  - access to communication partners familiar with AAC strategies
  - lack of trained staff
  - lack of awareness by staff
  - noise and environmental distractions
  - lack of privacy and space
  - comfort and positioning requirements

*Environmental factors that optimise communication opportunities may include:*

- Comfort
- Ready access to communication aids
- An environment that fosters communication

*Environmental factors that optimise the use of the communication strategy may include:*

- Appropriately trained staff
- Appropriately trained carers
- Consistency across different settings
- Time for communication

## RANGE STATEMENT

- Appropriate person may include:*
- Speech pathologist
  - Psychologist
  - Carer/family
  - Education staff
  - Support staff
  - Occupational therapist
  - Supervisor
  - Disability worker
- Other users may include:*
- Work
  - School
  - Home
  - Day service
  - Shops
  - Community services
  - Recreational facilities
- Barriers may include but are not limited to:*
- Opportunity barriers (those outside the person) such as policy, practice, attitude, knowledge and skill
  - Access barriers (relating to the person) such as linguistic, cognitive, motor and sensory skills
  - Note frameworks such as:
    - the 'Participation Model' by Beukelman and Mirenda is used within the AAC community to ascertain barriers in access and opportunity [Ref '*Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Supporting Children and Adults with Complex Communication Needs*' David R. Beukelman and Pat Mirenda 2005]
    - *Checklist of Communication Competencies* (Bloomburg and West 1999)

## Unit Sector(s)

Not Applicable