BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS

How to get the most out of Assistive Technology – Ethics Included

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First. Why do we need ethics?

What Can Go Wrong?

- Wrong equipment
- Little or no training
- Unsafe technology
- Poor use of funding
- Unscrupulous vendors
- Consumers without all the facts
- Is it an assessment or is it a sale?
- Working outside of competency area

AT Providers

- Assistive Technology Professionals (ATP)
- www.resna.org

- An assistive technology professional is a service provider who analyzes the needs of individuals with disabilities, assists in the selection of the appropriate equipment, and trains the consumer on how to properly use the specific equipment.

AT Job Titles

- Assistive Technology Specialist
- Rehabilitation Engineer (must have engineering degree)
- Rehabilitation Technologist
- Adaptive Equipment Specialist
- Assistive Technology Practitioner

Assessments and Sales

- Anyone can hang their AT “shingle” on the door and provide services
- ATP is helpful but not required except for DME sales
- Are you purchasing an assessment and if so is the source neutral or are they a vendor?

Values, Morals and Ethics? Huh?

- **Values** – Our own “right” and “wrong”
- **Morals** – Broader in concept reaching community or culture
- **Ethics** – Standards or rules for practice to guide behaviors

AT vs. IT

Always remember that not all AT providers are familiar with IT

And

Vice Versa!

Ethical Codes

- "a set of standards and principles that organizations create to provide guidelines for their members to follow in working with the public & each other"
- "a system of **principles** governing morality and acceptable conduct"

Common Principles

- **Autonomy** – Respecting the rights of others to make their own decisions
- **Beneficence** – To do good and promote well-being
- **Fidelity** - To be faithful; to keep promises and honor the trust placed in rehabilitation counselors

Common Principles

- **Justice** – Be fair in the treatment of all clients; provide appropriate services to all
- **Nonmaleficence** – Do no harm
- **Veracity**

CRC Code

- The Counseling Relationship
- Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and Privacy
- Advocacy and Accessibility
- **Professional Responsibility**
- **Relationships with Other Professionals**
- **Forensic and Indirect Services**
- Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation
- Teaching, Supervision, and Training
- Research and Publication
- Technology and Distance Counseling
- Business Practices
- Resolving Ethical Issues

http://www.crccertification.com/pages/crc_ccrc_code_of_ethics/10.php

RESNA Standards

- http://resna.org/dotAsset/11598.pdf
  - Welfare of those served
  - **Scope of competence**
  - Appropriate range of assistive technology
  - Direct assessment and evaluation of needs
  - Professional Development

Assistive Technology Ethics

- RESNA Code of Ethics http://resna.org/certification/RESNA_Code_of_Ethics.pdf
- NRRTS – National Registry of Rehab Technology Suppliers www.nrrts.org
- No “set” national or international code of ethics
- AOTA
- ASHA

Best Practices

- Collaboration of multiple entities including State Agencies, vendors, Universities and non-profit IL Centers.
- Best Practices for Assessments
- Best Practices for Vendors
- Resources for consumers, service providers and funders of assistive technology

Best Practices - Wisconsin

- http://www.wisconsinwistech.com/about/best-practices/

Key Components of an

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

Assistive Technology (AT) assessments may be obtained from rehabilitation providers who are employed in settings such as medical facilities, universities, schools, non-profit agencies or in a private practice. While certification is not required, it can be beneficial. The most common certification is the Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) (www.resna.org). Assessments provided by medical equipment dealers, manufacturer representatives, and private sales agents should adhere to the *Vendors of Assistive Technology Expectations for Best Practices*.

Providers of assistive technology assessments are expected to meet the criteria outlined in this document.

An assessment is generally requested by a consumer and/or the payer of the service (e.g. DVR, school district, long term care organization, etc.) to provide comprehensive information about the assistive technology options available to the consumer.

There are many reasons to make a referral for an assistive technology assessment. These reasons might include:

- Determining appropriate workplace or school accommodations
- Determining appropriate assistive technology to facilitate independent living

Before the Assessment is Requested – Payor's Responsiblities

The referral source should supply the following information to the assessment provider:

- ☐ What are the consumer's goals?
- ☐ Why are you referring this person?
- ☐ What is the functional outcome desired?
- ☐ What is the consumer's disability or disabilities?
- ☐ What is the impact of the disability or disabilities on functional skills?
- ☐ What are the relevant environmental concerns?
- ☐ Have appropriate releases of information been signed and has any relevant documentation been included with the referral?

Revised 8/8/2014

VENDORS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Expectations for Best Practices

Assistive technology devices may be obtained or purchased from medical equipment dealers, manufacturer representatives, private sales agents or non-profit agencies. Assistive technology devices:

- May have been recommended through a professional assessment
- May be consumer selected as a result of an equipment demonstration/loan
- May have been selected from product literature or a website

Providers of assistive technology products and services are expected to meet the criteria outlined in this document.

Qualifications of Vendors

Vendors must have sound knowledge of anatomy, physiology, disabling conditions and disease processes relevant to the technical aspects of the equipment they provide. In order to gain and maintain this knowledge, vendors will regularly engage in self-guided study and/or attend courses, seminars, trade shows, and other continuing education activities.

Sound knowledge can be defined as having the educational background, professional or personal experience or a combination thereof to provide comprehensive information and services to the consumer. This may be in the form of formal education, professional certification or in-depth training by a product manufacturer.

General Responsibilities of Assistive Technology Vendors

- Gather comprehensive background information about the individual's disability, functional limits and needs, as well as the individual's goals related to assistive technology.
- Explain the **range of options** that could meet the **needs of the consumer**, including free technology, no-tech to high tech options, commercially available technology or custom-fabricated technology.
- Be transparent: scope of products, services and manufacturer relationships.
- Remain objective when providing comparisons of the technology options.
- Use appropriate tools and measurements to assure proper fit and function of the equipment.
- Provide delivery, fitting and adjustment of equipment.
- Provide complete instruction of proper use.
- Provide maintenance and repair information, including who can provide these services and who pays for these services.
- Provide information about when the consumer may be eligible for an equipment update from a funding source, where applicable.

Revised 8/8/2014

Assessments…Best Practices

- AT assessments may be obtained from rehabilitation providers who are employed in settings such as medical facilities, universities, schools, non-profit agencies or in a private practice

- PT/OT
- ATP (RESNA)
- Rehab Technologist
- Rehab Engineer
- Vendor
- Manufacturer Rep
- Community Provider

Assessments…Best Practices

Referrals Come From

- Consumer
- Case Manager/SW
- Family/Friend
- Employer/School
- Healthcare Provider
- VR/VA

Assessment Locations

- Worksite
- Home
- Community
- School
- Facility

Assessments…Best Practices

Referral Source responsibilities

- Consumer Info
- Disability
- Referral Reasons
- Goals
- Expected Outcomes
- The more info the better

Assessments…Referral Example

- Referring Sue for rehab tech assmt. She's hard of hearing. She has a lot of anxiety about leaving the house for work, meetings, etc. due to this. Is not all that comfortable asking others to repeat themselves and tends to nod when she's not really hearing what the person is saying. She only wears one hearing aid (I think) because she said she feels off balance when she wears two. She is starting training program in Jan. for Health Info. Tech. and is very nervous about it. Referring her to determine what assistive devices and accommodations you recommend for school and work. Hopes to obtain employment in medical records (billing, coding, etc.). Was wondering about Real Time Captioning while in classroom? She has good typing/computer skills. PO is for 6 hrs. Where is best place to meet? She lives close to Tech. She does not have transp. But can use special transit if needed.

Assessments….Reports

- Disability info as it relates to AT needs/goals
- Methods used (demo/discussion/trial)
- Devices assessed and results (pro/con)
- Specific recommendations related to referral questions and goals/needs
- Product information (cost, vendors, etc.)

Assessments….Reports

- Free or low-cost solutions / resources
- Training requirements (one time/ongoing)
- Warranties and repair process
- Potential funding resources

Blurring The Lines…Assessor/Vendor

- A vendor was asked to provide a wheelchair for a nursing home resident. In order to “eliminate the trip charge” for the assessment he measured the man’s twin brother rather than the user himself

Vendor as Assessor

- Highly specialized assistive technology
- Durable Medical Equipment
- Limited community resources
- Limited product representation

- Vendors rely upon sales….
- It's not wrong but it's worth remembering
- **Will the vendor refer elsewhere if it's beyond their scope of work?**

Best Practices…Vendors

- Vendors must have sound knowledge of anatomy, physiology, disabling conditions, and disease processes relevant to the technical aspects of the equipment they provide
- Sound Knowledge - defined as having the educational background, professional or personal experience or a combination thereof to provide comprehensive information and services to the consumer. This may be in the form of formal education, professional certification or in-depth training by a product manufacturer

Best Practices…Vendors

- Expectations are to gather comprehensive background information related to disability, goals, etc.
- Explain the range of options that could meet the needs of the consumer: free technology, no-tech to high tech options, commercially available technology or custom-fabricated technology

Best Practices…Vendors

- Transparency – Be transparent by disclosing the products which they represent and that competitor's products may not be considered
- Use appropriate assessment procedures (twin example)
- Provide appropriate sales, delivery, setup and training

Best Practices…Vendors

- Provide clear information regarding warranties, repairs and service options
- Provide exact costs, copayments, reimbursement procedures
- Obtain prior authorizations as required
- Maintain qualified, knowledgeable staff

Return to Ethics….Decisions

- Corey Model
- Feminist Model
- Good Reason Approach
- Hybrid – what most use
- RAD Process

Good Reason Approach

- Known as the Golden Rule
- What would you want someone to do to you, or your spouse, sibling, parent, etc?
- Which choice would be the least harmful?
- Other questions to ask:
- Would I want what I was doing published in the newspaper?
- Would I like my family to know?
- Will it make me proud?
- Is it legal?
- What effect will it have on the behavior of others?
- How will I feel?

Return to Ethics….Decisions

- May be uncomfortable and it may not feel good to make the right decision
- Frequently involves choosing between two unappealing options
- Requires counselors to think of how the profession is trusted and perceived by the public
- Means that counselors may have to deal with uncertainty and that there might not be a “right” answer

Define:
Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation: Any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable an applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.

Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that an individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities.

Reasonable and Equal (Education)

- Reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity.
- Equal opportunity means an opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to a similarly situated student without a disability.

July 26, 1990

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA and ADAAA)

- Title I - Employment
- Title II - State & Local Government
- Title III - Public Accommodations
- Title IV - Telecommunications
- Title V - Misc

September 26, 1973

Rehab Act of 1973

- Section 501: Federal government's hiring practices
- Section 502: Created the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB)
- Section 503: Prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of physical or mental disability by businesses with federal contracts or their subcontractors.
- Section 504: Prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability in programs receiving federal funds.

Best Practices - Wisconsin

- http://www.wisconsinwistech.com/about/best-practices/

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QUESTIONS????

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WISTECH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY