

WELCOME!

June 21, 2021



Guest Speaker:

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The SLP ALS Augmentative Communication Evaluation

The ALS Association

National Office-Care Services

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Atrium Health

ALS: The SLP ALS Augmentative Communication Evaluation

Amy Wright, SLP
Edwin D. Holt Communication Lab
at Carolinas Neuromuscular/ALS Center

SPEAKER DISCLOSURE

Financial:

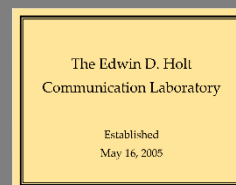
- Speech-Language Pathologist at Carolinas Neuromuscular/ALS-MDA Center, part of Atrium Health Neurosciences Institute

Nonfinancial:

- None



Mr. O'Malley



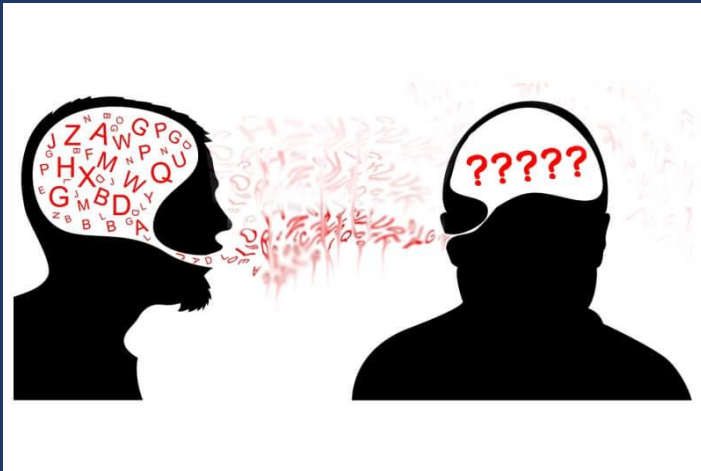
K. Amy Wright, MCD, CCC-SLP



WHAT I DO...

Evaluate and recommended...

Compensatory strategies



Assistive Technology



TERMINOLOGY

AAC = Augmentative and Alternative Communication

- devices or methods that supplement or replace natural speech
- can be no/low tech or high tech

SGD = Speech Generating Device

(AKA Communication Device)

- “durable medical equipment that provides an individual who has a severe speech impairment with the ability to meet his or her functional speaking needs.” (per the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services)

AAC or SGD???



OVERVIEW

When should I start thinking about getting a speech generating device?

Who can help me with this and where will it happen?

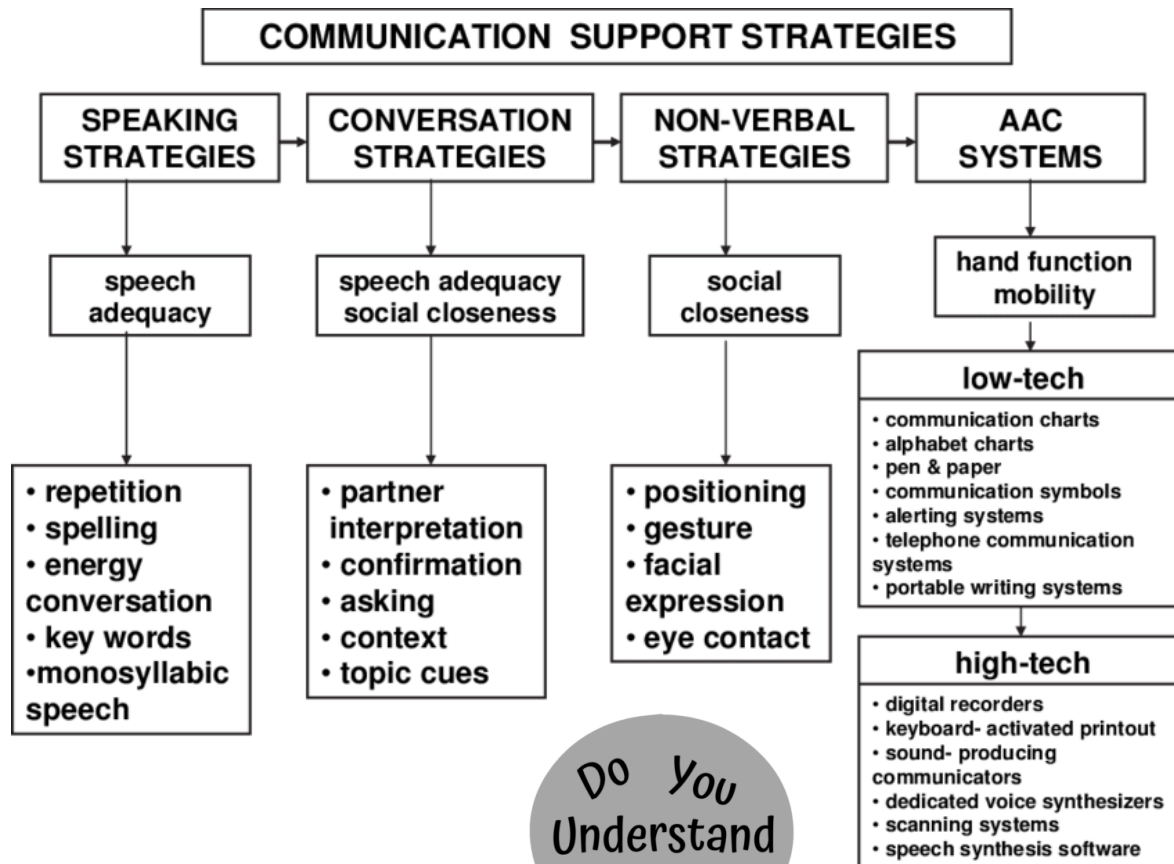
What will my insurance cover?

What should I expect from a formal AAC evaluation?

What does the funding process involve?

AAC EVALUATION – WHEN??

Taken from Dysarthria in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis: A Review



Do You Understand Me?

- More repetition required?
- Strategies not always working?
- Frustration?
- Fatigue?
- ... it's time!



AAC EVALUATION – WHO?



AAC consultant



ATP/tech guru



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

ALS
ASSOCIATION



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AAC EVALUATION – WHERE?



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At Home



NCATP
North Carolina Assistive
Technology Program



TEDPA
Telecommunications Equipment
Distribution Program Association

AT3
Center



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OPTIONS



★ NO TECH/QUICK ACCESS AAC

OFF-THE-SHELF AAC

INSURANCE-FUNDED AAC

LOANER AAC

NO-TECH/QUICK ACCESS

- Sign language/ gesture

- Writing

- Communication Boards:

- Letter
- Word/phrase
- picture

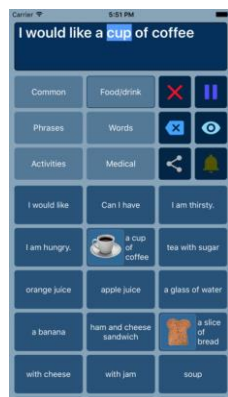


A	B	C	D	SPACE	END OF MESSAGE
E	F	G	H	START OVER	I DON'T KNOW
I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Qu	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	0	YES	NO

Letter Board - ABIOU format



OFF-THE-SHELF POSSIBILITIES...



Smart device + text to speech app

Manual Access

Lightweight/Handheld

Android/iOS apps



Tablet/laptop + headmouse + TTS + onscreen keyboard + autoclick + mount

Hands-free access

Desktop, floor or wheelchair mount

Windows, iOS or Android

HIGH TECH/INSURANCE FUNDED AAC



WHAT IS “BEST”



SGD FUNDING BASICS

- If you have Medicare Part B, SGDs are covered if:
 - Speech impairment is severe
 - SGD is medically appropriate
 - SGD is to be used solely by the individual with the speech impairment
 - SGD is Dedicated (as shipped, may allow for communication via email, text and/or phone but not full desktop)
- Most insurances will follow Medicare guidelines (80%)
- VA funding will cover cost of SGD/accessories for Veterans with ALS
- NOT covered for residents of nursing facilities or individuals under Hospice care

AAC EVALUATION – HOW LONG?



ALS AAC EVALUATION COMPONENTS

INTERVIEW

ASSESSMENTS

SGD TRIALS

FUNDING PROCESS

AAC USER INTERVIEW

- Tech experience
- Caregiver support
- Daily activities
- Interests
- Med history
- Physical ability
- Vision
- Hearing
- Communication settings
- Communication partners
- Insurance



INTERVIEW CONTINUED – PRIORITIES!!!

- F2F communication
- Email
- Phone
- SMS/iMessage
- Internet access – Googling!
- Social media
- VoIP
- Home automation
- More...



OTHER ASSESSMENTS

Face/Mouth
muscles

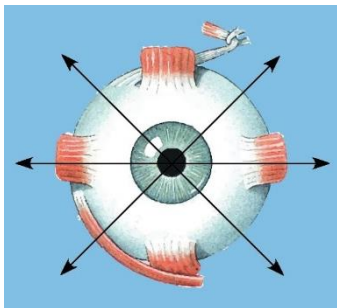
Speech
intelligibility

Rate of speech

Ability to
read/spell

Comprehension

Memory and
problem-solving
skills



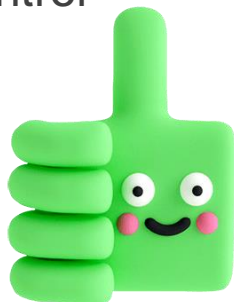
Attention during
trials



SGD TRIALS

REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDING APPROVAL

- Rule out low-cost options
- Try multiple SGDs
- Justify access method
- Verify effective use
 - Calibration/cursor control
 - Communication



REQUIREMENTS FOR USER SATISFACTION

- Comfort with use
- Access to priority features
- Reliable support
- Realistic expectations
- Customization/adjustable settings
- Appropriate mounting



HIGH TECH/INSURANCE FUNDED AAC



EyeTech
EyeOn



PRC
Accent 1400



Grid Pad



Eyegaze
Edge



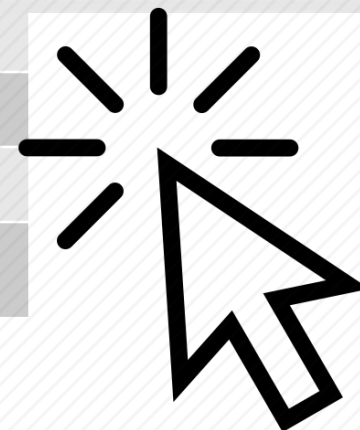
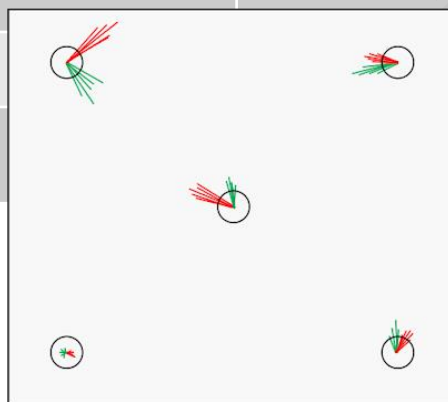
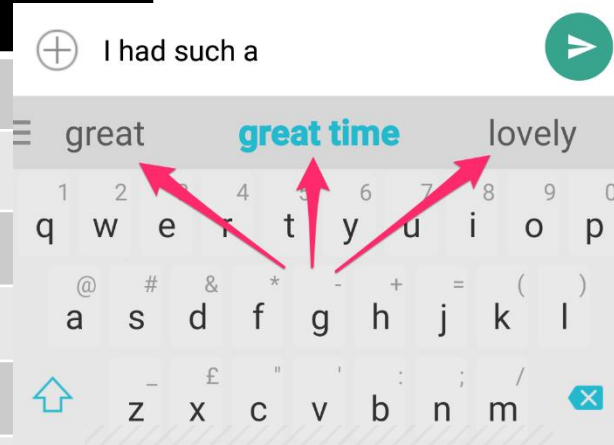
Tobii DynaVox
I-Series



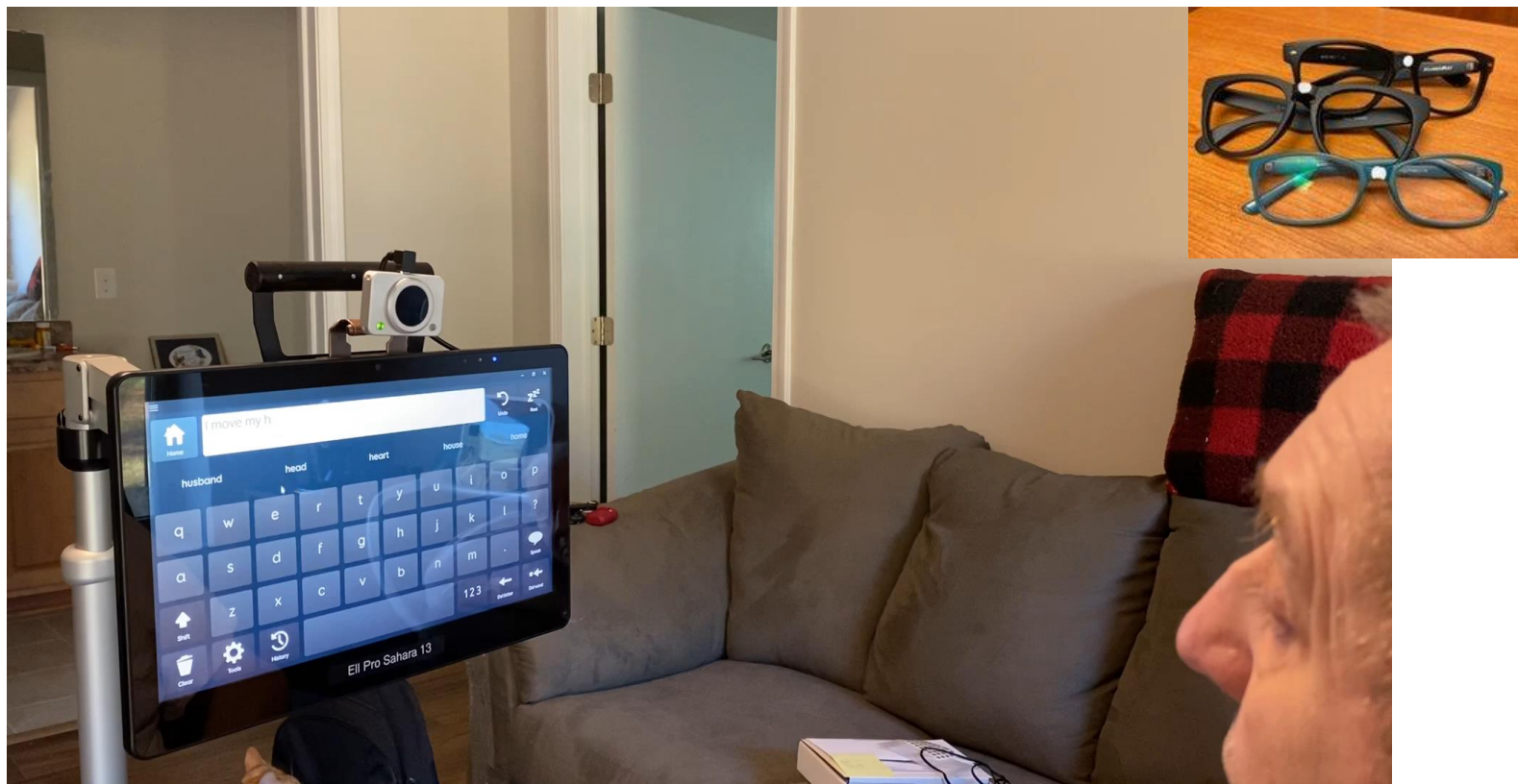
zuvo with eyespeak

RATING/DOCUMENTING AAC TRIALS

	DEVICE 1	DEVICE 2	DEVICE 3
Spelling accuracy	75%	90%	85%
Use of word prediction	maximal cues		
Error ID/correction	minimal cues		
Phrase storage/retrieval	moderate cues		
User area navigation	moderate cues		
Audio feedback	click sound		
Calibration	good w/2 point improvements		
Click type/method & timing	auto-click/1 second		
Speed /rate of communication	7 WPM (no WP) 14 WPM (w/WP)		



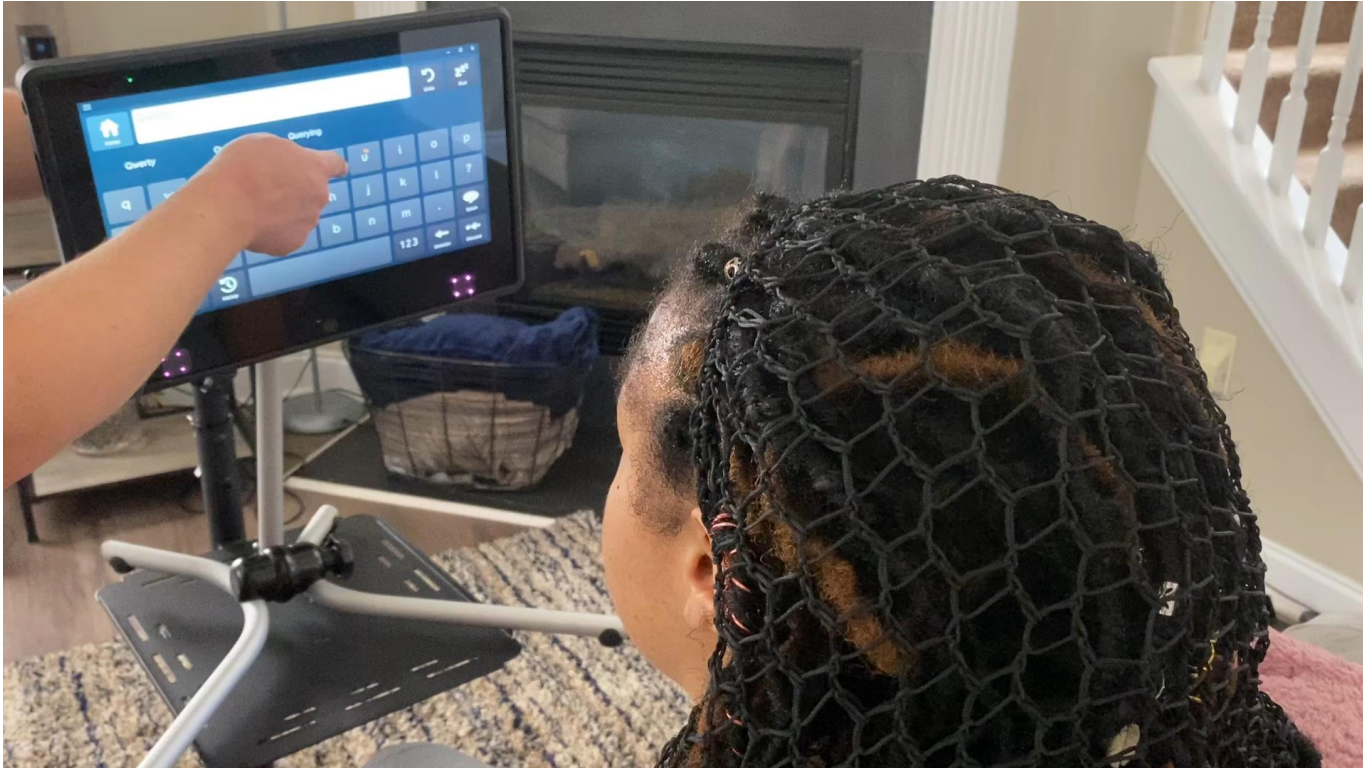
OPTICAL HEAD-POINTING



- ✓ Selection Accuracy
- ✓ Pause/resume

- ✓ Troubleshooting
- ✓ Fatigue

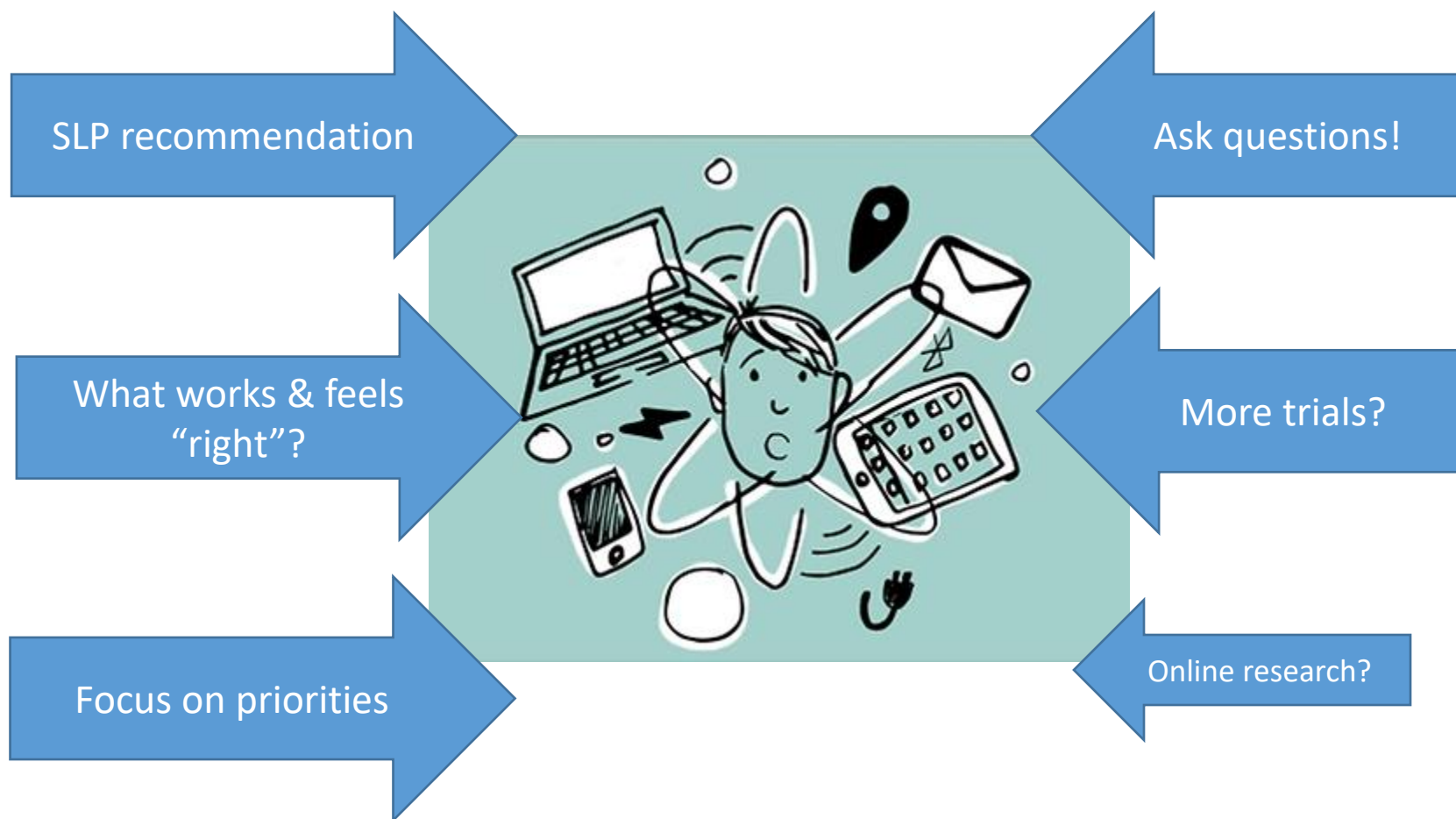
EYE-TRACKING



- ✓ Positioning
- ✓ Calibration
- ✓ Selection accuracy

- ✓ Pause/resume
- ✓ Troubleshooting
- ✓ Fatigue

HOW DO I DECIDE???



FUNDING CHECKLIST: who does what?

- ☐ Client information form
- ☐ Equipment quote
- ☐ Release/Assignment of Benefits Agreement Form
- ☐ Physician's Prescription
- ☐ SLP augmentative communication evaluation report
- ☐ F2F MD note mentioning need for SGD
- ☐ Copies of insurance, Medicare or Medicaid cards
- ☐ State Medicaid Forms (if applicable)
 - ☐ LMN/CMN
 - ☐ 30-day trial?



WHEN WILL I GET IT??

6-8 weeks (or more)



What can I do in the meantime?

- Use low-tech/quick access AAC
- Stay in touch with your SLP
- Reach out to SGD funding department
- Contact insurance if private (not M'Care/Caid)



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Questions?

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