

Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Profile – A Continuum of Learning (Kovach, 2009)

1. This tool/instrument was designed for people between 2-0 to 21-11.

- Some adults with complex communication needs
- Appropriate for use with adults who do not have acquired communication disorders and who use AAC systems.
- The profile is not specific to a disorder, severity, or setting.

- **Parts of the assessment tool:**
- This assessment tool includes a manual and protocol for scoring. It can be used for initial AAC assessments or as a progress-monitoring tool (i.e., during a re-evaluation or after implementation of intervention strategies). It is used to measure functional skills that are needed to develop communicative competence using AAC systems.

Areas of learning: Operational (function), Linguistic (receptive and expressive language), Social (relating to others), and Strategic (multiple modes of communication)

- Operational Area of Learning - Assess the development of the technical skills used to operate the AAC system, including the ability to access the system to transmit information.

Skill Set Levels: Orientation and Awareness, Manipulation, Focused Use, AAC System Navigation, and AAC System Programming and Use.

- Linguistic Area of Learning - Assess the development of receptive and expressive language skills used in the home and community, the knowledge and use of the language "code" of the AAC system, and the ability to attend to both during a communicative interaction. Skill Set Levels: Communication Awareness, Communication with Specific Meaning, Communication by Combining Words, Communication Using Syntax and Morphology, and Communication Using Refined Language.

- Social Area of Learning - Assess the development of skills needed for social communication including the individual's self-image as a communicator and the desire to communicate reciprocally with others. Skill Set Levels: Natural Behaviors, Effective Regulatory Behaviors, Practiced Interaction, Social Awareness and Competence, and Social Mastery.
- Strategic Area of Learning - Assess the knowledge of what can be communicated and how best to communicate it as well as developing compensatory strategies for effective communication. Skill Set Levels: Pre-Intentional/Reflexive, Intentional, Programmed Message Use, Appropriate Message Selection and Use, and Strategic Mastery.

5 skill set levels in each learning area. These represent a hierarchical continuum of communication abilities. Skill Set Level 1: AAC system is used in a basic, functional manner. Level 5: individual has demonstrated mastery of the AAC system

Materials: AAC Profile Manual and Protocols

Natural activities that clients enjoy are used to engage them in communication.

Quantitative and qualitative information is obtained from this assessment instrument (i.e., What scores or levels are obtained, if any?)

- Identify areas of strength and those that need intervention and instruction
- Determine functional, long-range outcomes and the steps toward achieving them
- Compare individual performance over time toward desired outcomes

- Identify ways that AAC support team members can define and coordinate their roles for intervention and instruction programs
- Identify and provide optimal learning environments

Scoring:

- The frequency an individual demonstrates the skills/behaviors are rated on a 3, 2, 1 scale:
- 3 = Frequently
- 2 = Sometimes
- 1 = Seldom

- Based on how frequently skills are used, the support team determines a Communicative Competence Level. The level can be:
 - where the individual currently demonstrates a majority of the assessment skills
 - set higher if the team determines it is a realistic goal for the individual where intervention is targeted
 - different for each Area of Learning

Use the results to determine which skills the individual needs to develop or increase competency with his AAC device. Profile results guide intervention and instruction by providing a systematic way to measure and document progress.

When the majority of indicators in a skill set level in each learning area are scored with a 3, that is the client's current level of performance. When the majority of indicators in a skill set level in each area of learning are 1 or 2, that is the client's desired level of performance.

How can this information be used to inform future AAC intervention?

Used for an initial evaluation, re-evaluation, and progress monitoring.

Used to inform future AAC intervention to determine progress and future goals.