



Introduction to Facilitated Communication

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Topics

- What is FC
- Brief history including FC in Vermont and Tracy's experience
- Overview of Augmentative / alternative communication
- Candidacy for FC/ST
- Understanding movement and FC/ST
- Overview of the FC/ST training process
- Basic elements of the technique
- Goals for FC training and skill development of FC users

What is Facilitated Communication?

Facilitated Communication, or facilitated communication training is a form of augmentative alternative communication (AAC) in which people develop pointing skills for communication using pictures, symbols, letters and words.

In the use of FC, a communication partner or facilitator provides physical support to the individual to help them overcome neuro-motor problems which prevent them from pointing independently or reliably.

Examples of these problems include impulsivity, regulation of movement, poor eye/hand coordination, and difficulty with initiating and sustaining movement. The goal of FC training is for individuals to develop *independent* pointing skills.

What is facilitated communication?

Strongest therapy for people with no means of expression is sensational, controversial, revolutionary, *technically subtle* FC. It involves understanding *movement lapses* of people and providing physical support to help overcome them. Plastic nature of users of FC requires topnotch weaning of support towards ultimate goal of independence.

Larry Bissonnette



Some history



Rosemary Crossley
and Anne McDonald



Tracy's story



Understanding Augmentative/Alternative Communication and FC

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to all forms of communication that enhance or supplement speech and writing.

- ***Augmentative Communication***

supplements or adds to verbal and nonverbal communication.

- ***Alternative Communication*** is for people with no verbal and minimal nonverbal output.



Examples of AAC

- Gestures
- Body actions
- Head shaking
- Facial expressions
- Signing
- Use of communication board
- Use of electronic device
- Eye gaze

STEAKS & CHOPS

All of Joe's steaks are seasoned with our Signature Steak Spice and grilled just the way you like it.

Joe's Amazing Chops
Two French trimmed bone-in pork chops broiled with our Whiskey BBQ sauce and topped with crisp fried onions. Served with mashed potatoes. \$13.99

1lb T Bone Steak
Our thick and juicy butter braised Canadian AAA 1 lb T Bone steak. Served with fries. **Black Special \$15.00**

Just the way you like it
Rare Slightly undercooked
Medium Rare A red centre
Medium Well Slightly pink
Well Done No pink

NEW! New York Striploin Steak
Our signature cut 16 oz Canadian AAA New York Striploin steak broiled with butter. Served with veggie and choice of potato. \$17.99

Petit Sirloin
A 6 oz Canadian AAA Top Sirloin steak seasoned and grilled to perfection. Served with veggies and choice of potato. \$12.99

DRESS IT UP!
Garlic Sautéed Mushrooms \$2.99
Pasta/Potato Sauce \$1.99
Crispy Fried Onions \$1.99
Sautéed Garlic Shrimp \$2.99

RIBS
Full Rack
A full rack of Joe's mouth watering back ribs charbroiled and glazed with Joe's Classic BBQ Sauce or our Whiskey BBQ Sauce. Served with fries. \$21.99

Half Rack
A half rack of Joe's mouth watering back ribs charbroiled and glazed with Joe's Classic BBQ Sauce or our Whiskey BBQ Sauce. Served with fries. \$13.99

Rib & Wing Combo
Half rack of ribs and Joe's famous wings tossed in your favourite sauce. Served with fries. \$18.99

FAJITAS
Grilled Steak
Seasoned Canadian AAA Top Sirloin steak charbroiled and served with a sizzler skillet of bell peppers and sweet onions. \$16.99

Grilled Chicken
Seasoned chicken breast charbroiled and served with a sizzler skillet of bell peppers and sweet onions. \$15.99

FABULOUS FIXIN'S
Joe's fajitas are served with a tray of your choice of side salad, French dressing, lettuce and onion, with flour tortillas.

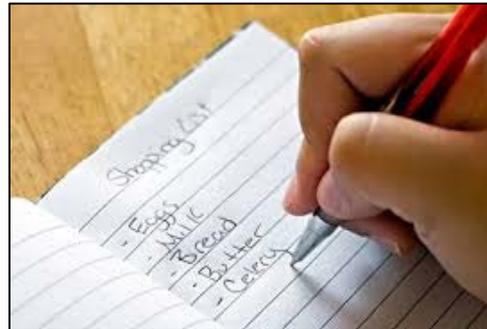
New York Striploin Steak With Loaded Baked Potato

Grilled Chicken Fajitas

Rib & Wing Combo



Many forms of communication



Total Communication Approach:

A full system of strategies which might include sign language, simple gestures and facial expressions, single words and phrases, and use of electronic devices.

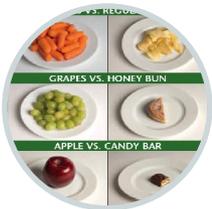
Using total communication



I might greet someone with a hand wave



I might show them some pictures of my vacation to share information

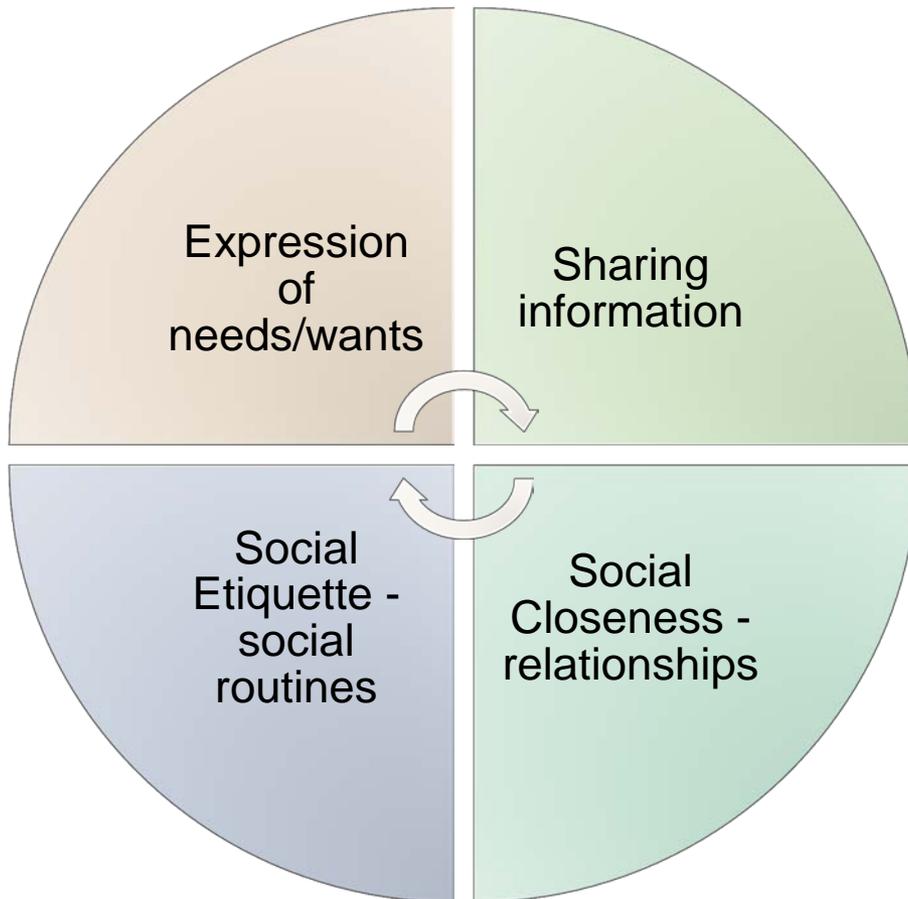


I might point to a picture or word for a snack I want

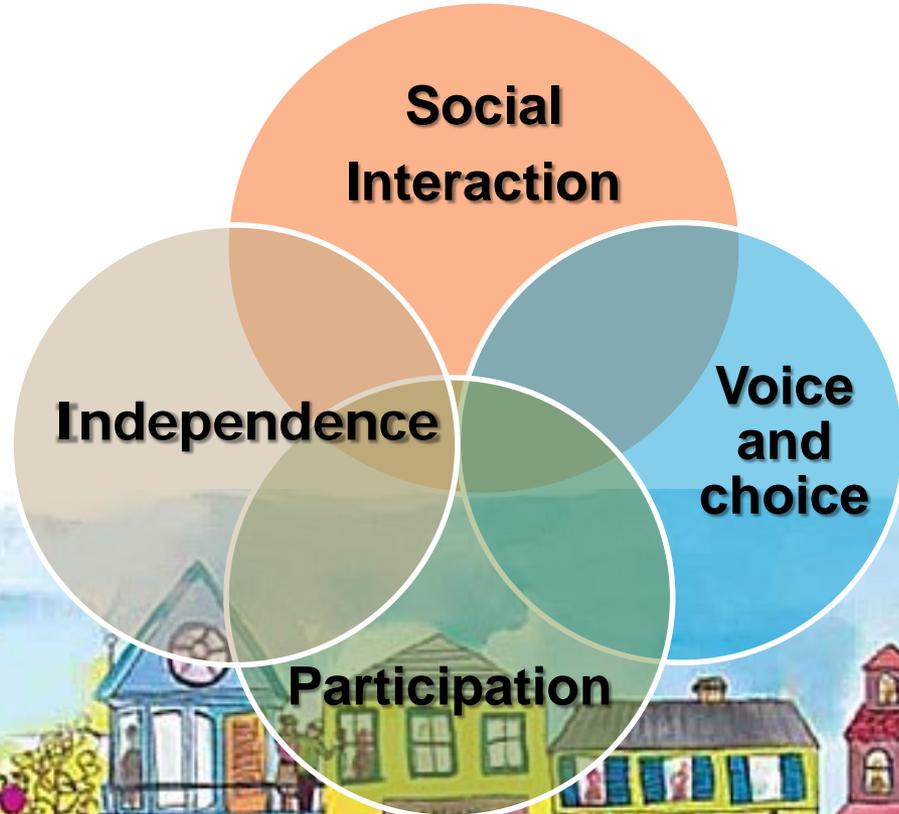


I might make a comment or share an opinion by spelling a message out

Purposes of communication



Success with AAC



Supports for Communication

Attitudes and Beliefs

“Presumption of
Competence”

Opportunities for
communication

Technology ,
equipment, positioning

Partner skills and training

Physical support

Communication Support

Emotional Support



**Language and
Motor skills**

Presumption of Competence



Every person, regardless of the severity of his/her disabilities, has the right and the ability to communicate with others, express everyday preferences and exercise at least some control over his or her daily life.

Each individual, therefore, should be given the chance, training, technology, respect and encouragement to do so.

Bob Williams

Larry Bissonnette

“Fastening labels on people is like leasing cars with the destinations determined beforehand.”



Specialized forms of AAC



Sign language

Selecting through touching, pointing, etc. pictures, symbols, words and letters to communicate a message



Technology (non-electronic and electronic) is an important part of AAC



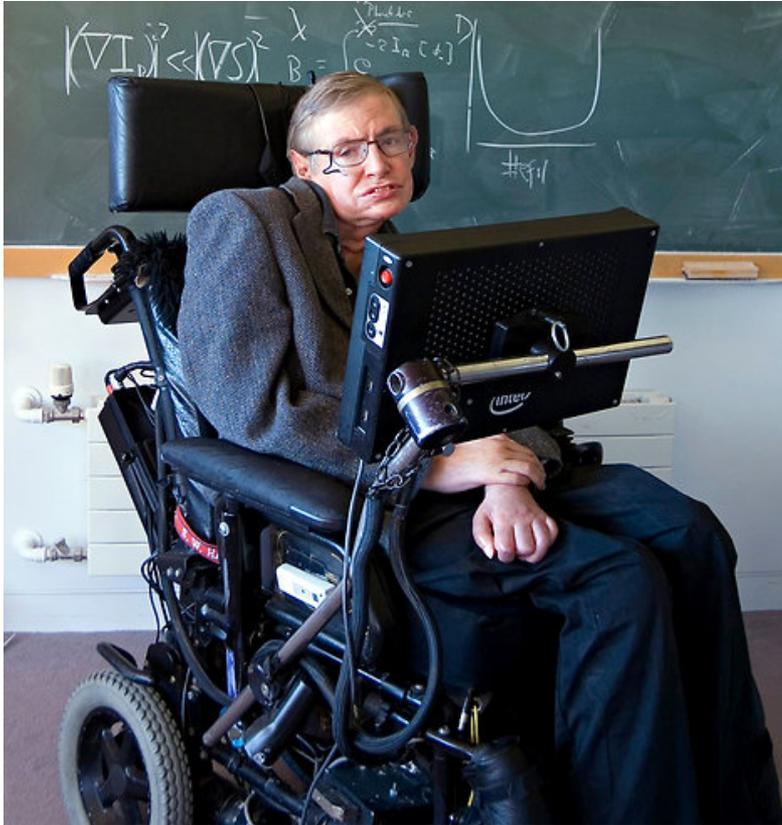


What is the best physical access strategy ?

Difficulties with physical access may impact a person's ability to demonstrate language/literacy skills that they may already have or limit their ability to participate in instruction to develop these skills.



Christy Brown on writing his first letter: "That one letter, scrawled on the floor with a broken bit of yellow chalk gripped between my toes, was my road to a new world, my key to mental freedom."



Stephen Hawking

Pointing is the most common way to access communication aids and devices.





Describe this person's pointing and how it impacts on his ability to access communication devices.

 I want		 I see		 thank you	
 drink	 biscuit	 apple	 cake	 crisps	 banana
 book	 sand	 bricks	 pens	 farm	 puzzle
 shoe	 jumper	 trousers	 coat	 sock	 hat



The motor/movement skills needed for effective communication through pointing vary depending on what is being communicated and what communication aid/device is being used.

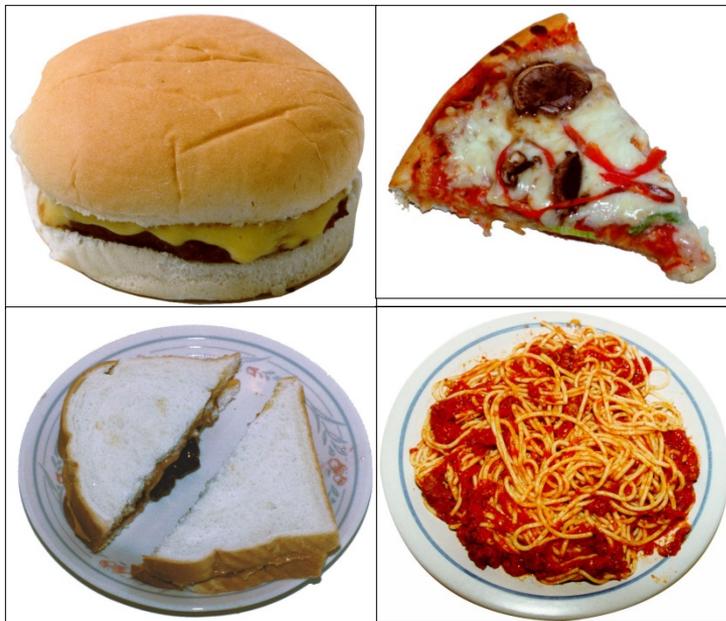
In the use of FC, a communication partner or facilitator provides ***physical support*** to the individual to help them overcome neuro-motor problems which prevent them from pointing independently or reliably.

The purpose of using physical support is to help a person develop effective *pointing skills* for communication. This could include the use of pictures, symbols, letters and words and both electronic and non-electronic communication aids.

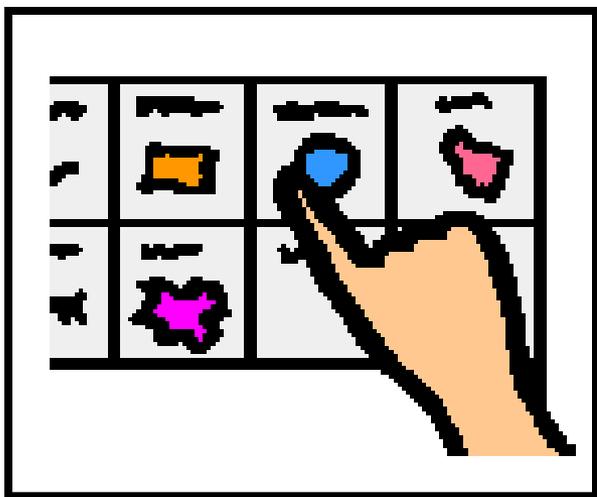


Candidacy for FC

Therefore, the assessment process for FC starts with looking to see whether a person has *physical/movement problems* which affect their ability to point independently or reliably and whether physical support can help a person overcome those problems.



Q W E R T Y U I O P delete
A S D F G H J K L
Z X C V B N M , .
space



Observe the person doing a variety of activities involving pointing. Look for physical problems that might be affecting pointing.

Examples of physical/movement problems

- Difficulty isolating an index finger
- Poor eye/hand coordination
- Pointing too quickly
- Initiating the movement to point
- Hitting the same selection repetitively
- Difficulty maintaining rhythm

Facilitated communication and speech

FC is also helpful for people whose speech is patterned, consisting of the use of scripted words and phrases. They often have difficulty generating spontaneous or novel communication.

Larry – Speech and Typing



“Echolalic language comes down my pipes like a pre-programmed train that is way off its itinerary.”

Independent typing is not always
intentional communication:

LARRYFEELBETTERHAPPY

GOINGHOMEPINESTWINOOSKIIVT

SITDOWNCHAIRTVONSUPPER

CORNSTACKPOTATOSION

PLAINSPEESICETEESPIE

BANANASMILKBEER

PRINT



Explore the use of different physical support strategies that will accommodate a physical problem or help to improve it.

Tracy Thresher:



My impulse control problems, my way of going too hard at the letters and my problems with perseveration, are things I need help from my facilitators...

The role of physical support in controlling and improving movement for communication

Physical support is one of an array of supports that a person using AAC may need to communicate effectively.

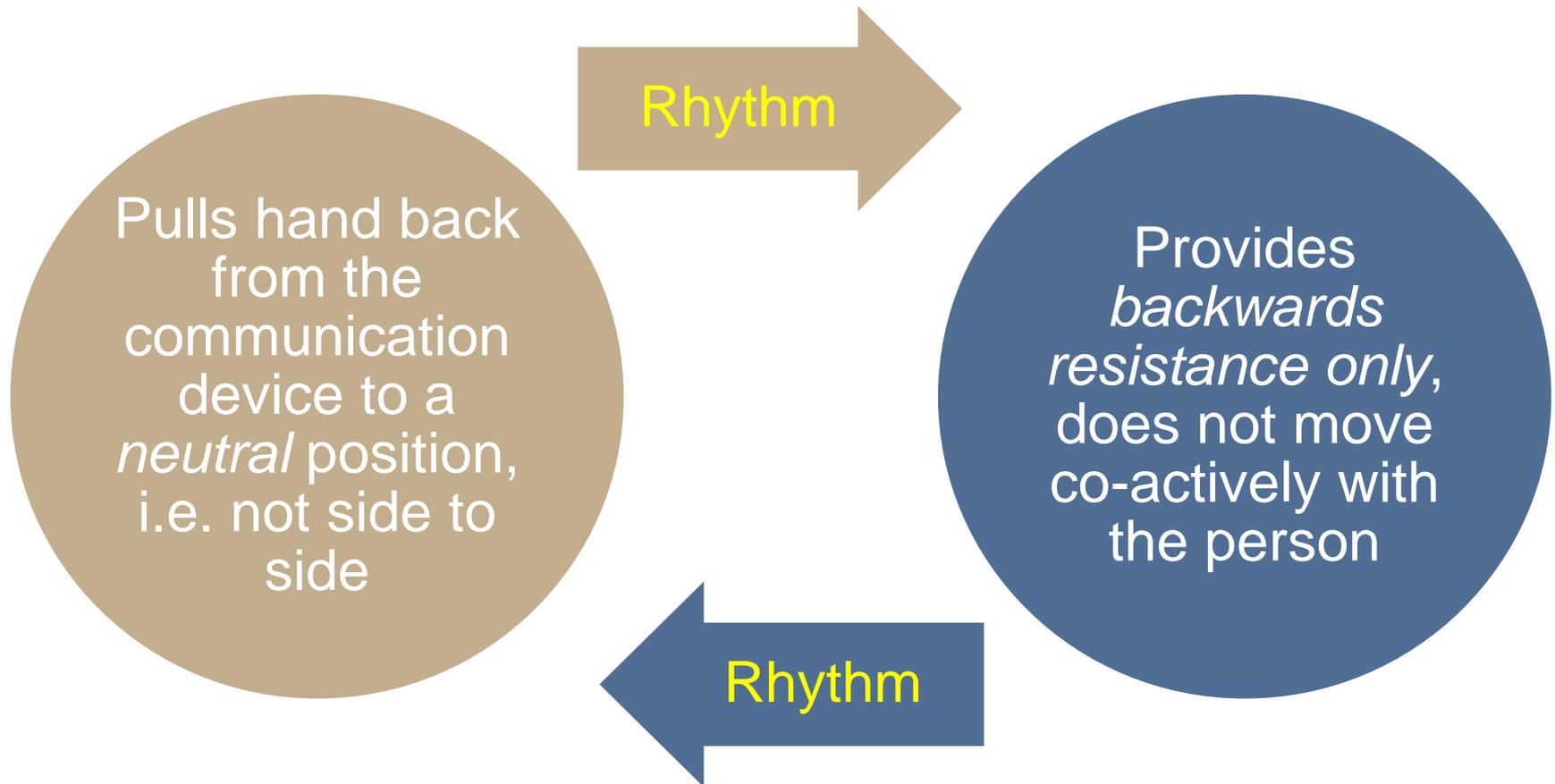
Physical support

The facilitator must slow me down and ***pull my arm back*** to help me start again so that I can point to the correct letter I am going for. I would not be able to type the words I really want without the ***firm resistance*** of the facilitator.

Tracy Thresher



Physical Support



Tracy on support



“It is a grounding of both my physical issues with where my body is in space and telling my motoring to type to go slow. Pay attention to the output with trusted touch. I am less anxious. Therefore I can truly type my own thoughts. That is the basis of the physical support to create a functional typing rhythm.”

Physical Support

- Provides physical support *in response* to specific hand function/movement issues
 - For example, slowing down a person who is pointing too fast or molding a person's fingers back from their index finger
 - For low muscle tone/strength, pulling a person's hand back above their board or device so that that they can reach selections



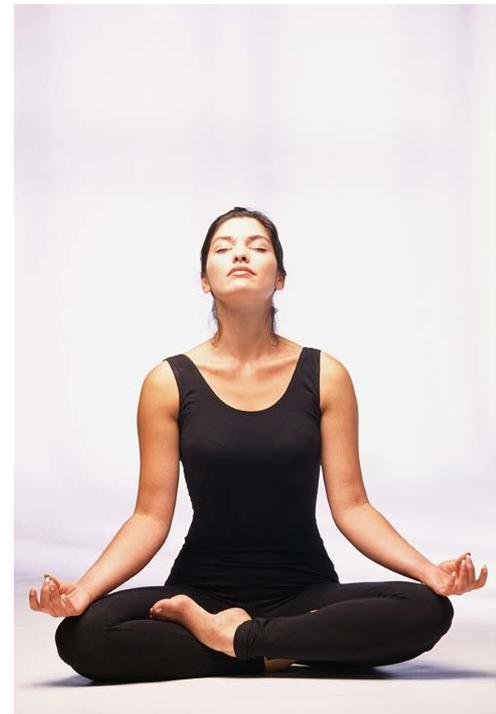
The person may not be able to isolate an index finger and need their fingers molded back from their index finger.



The person may also be unable to pull the hand back after making a forward movement and/or sequence forward and back movements unless the pointing hand or limb is steadied and supported....but not directed.

Physical support helps:

- Regulation
- Control
- Body awareness
- Organization
- Connection
- Focus



High Muscle Tone

I have high tone. Connecting to old memories pushed up my anxiety making tough work for my facilitators. I need much support to get organized in my typing movement.

Tracy on controlling his movement

I go too fast and pound out automatics that are not my intelligent thoughts. The same is true for my speech. My yes is mostly unreliable. However, my no is reliable.

Proprioception

I have proprioception challenges; I do not always know where my body is in space.

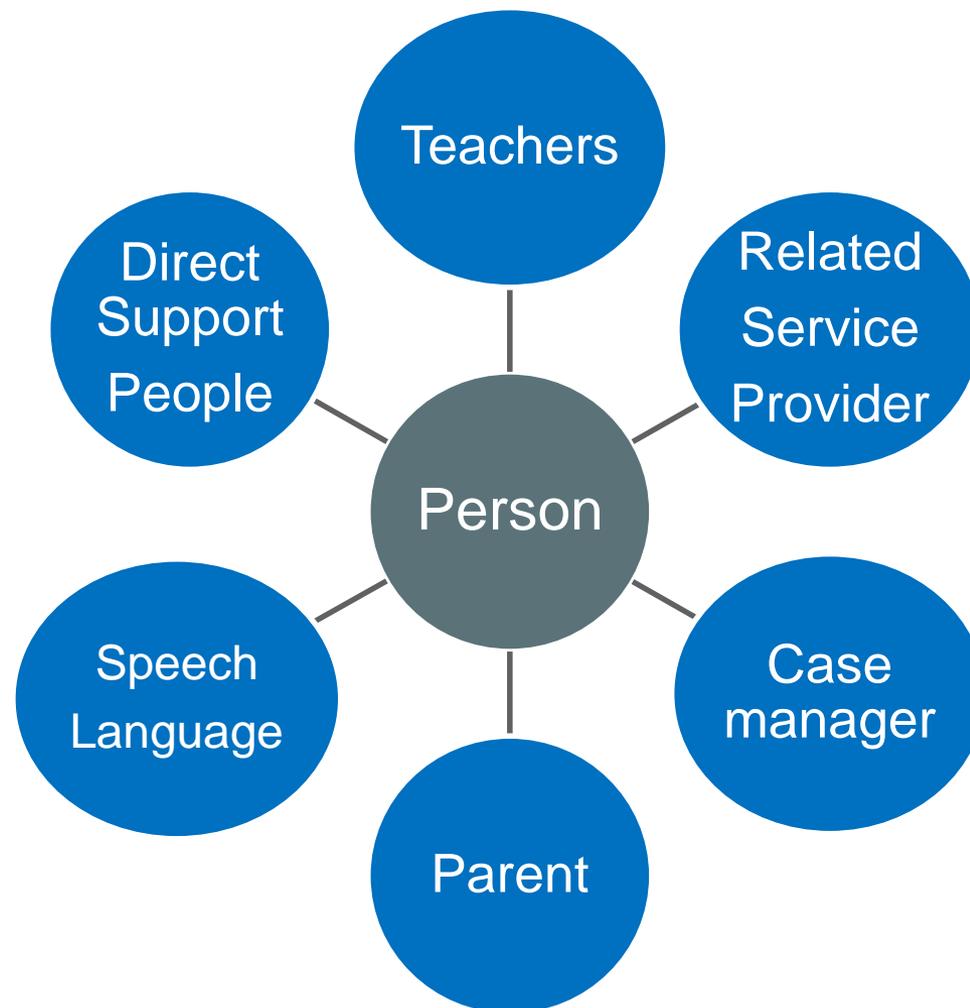
Sue Rubin



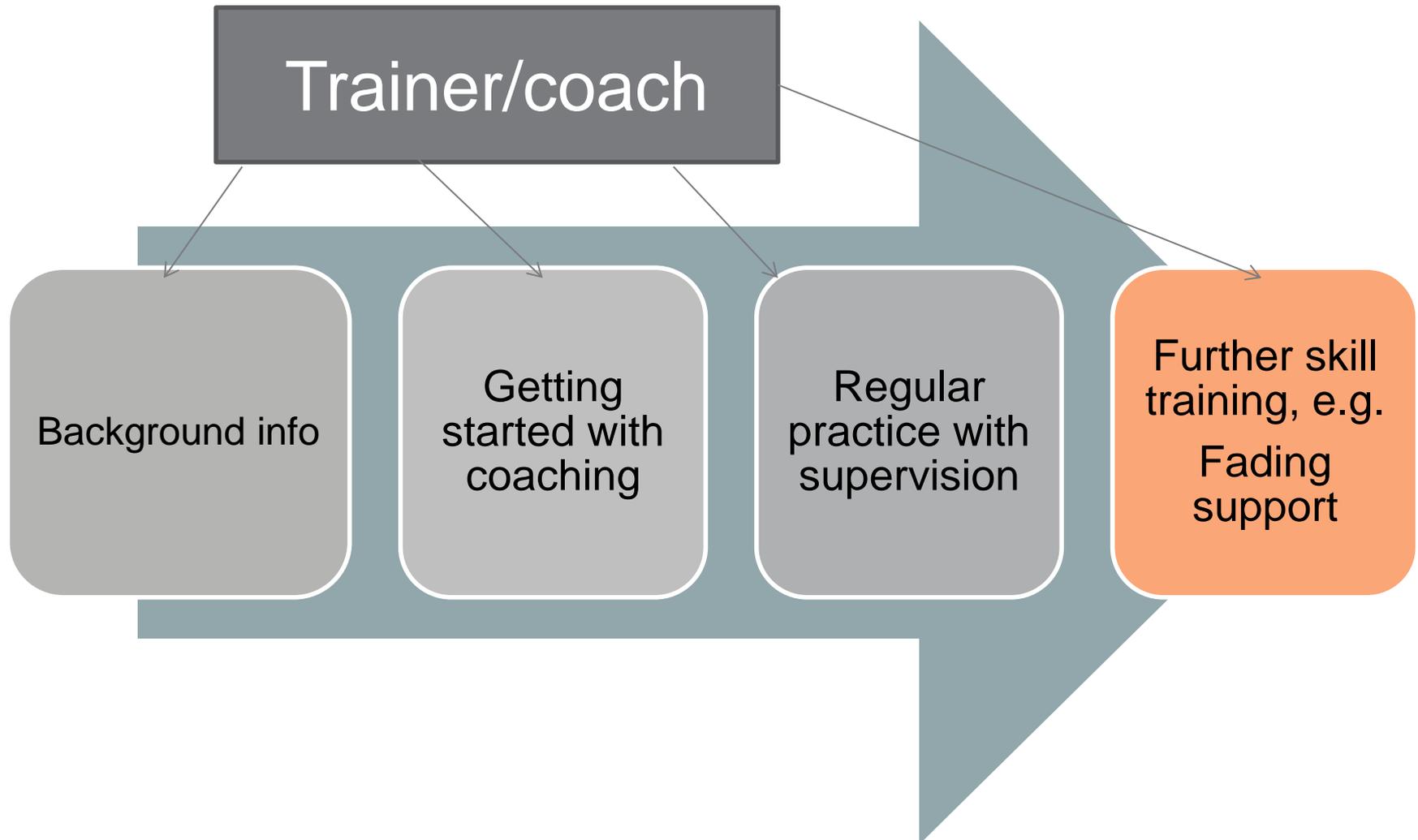
“Movement issues for me are a connection difficulty. I hear you ask me to complete a task, but my legs stay put. Through the use of FC, I have been better able to get my body to engage in a task. Typing requires thinking and focus. My body has been trained to focus on movement when asked to do something or asked to respond. “

The training process

Team planning



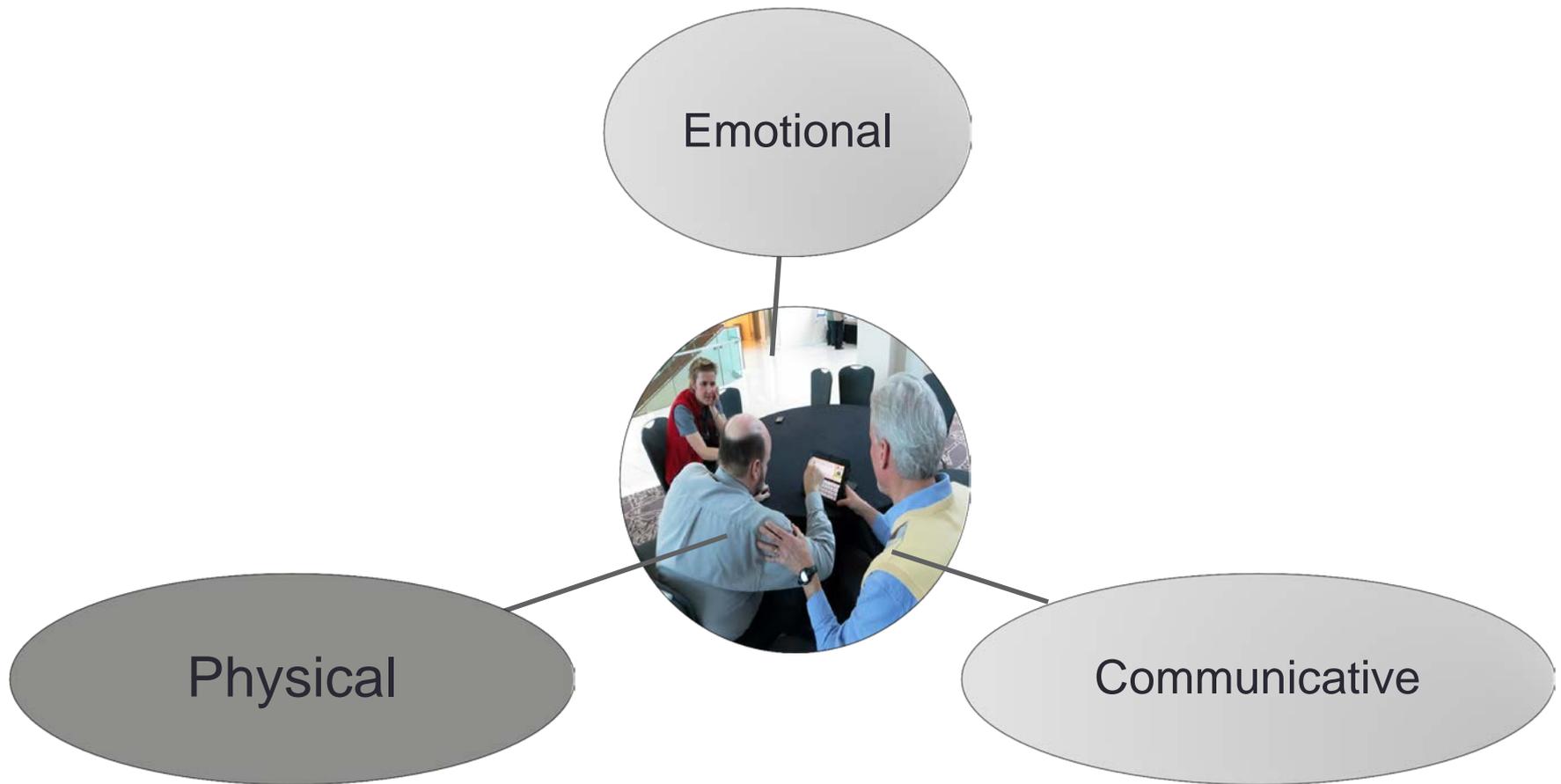
The training process



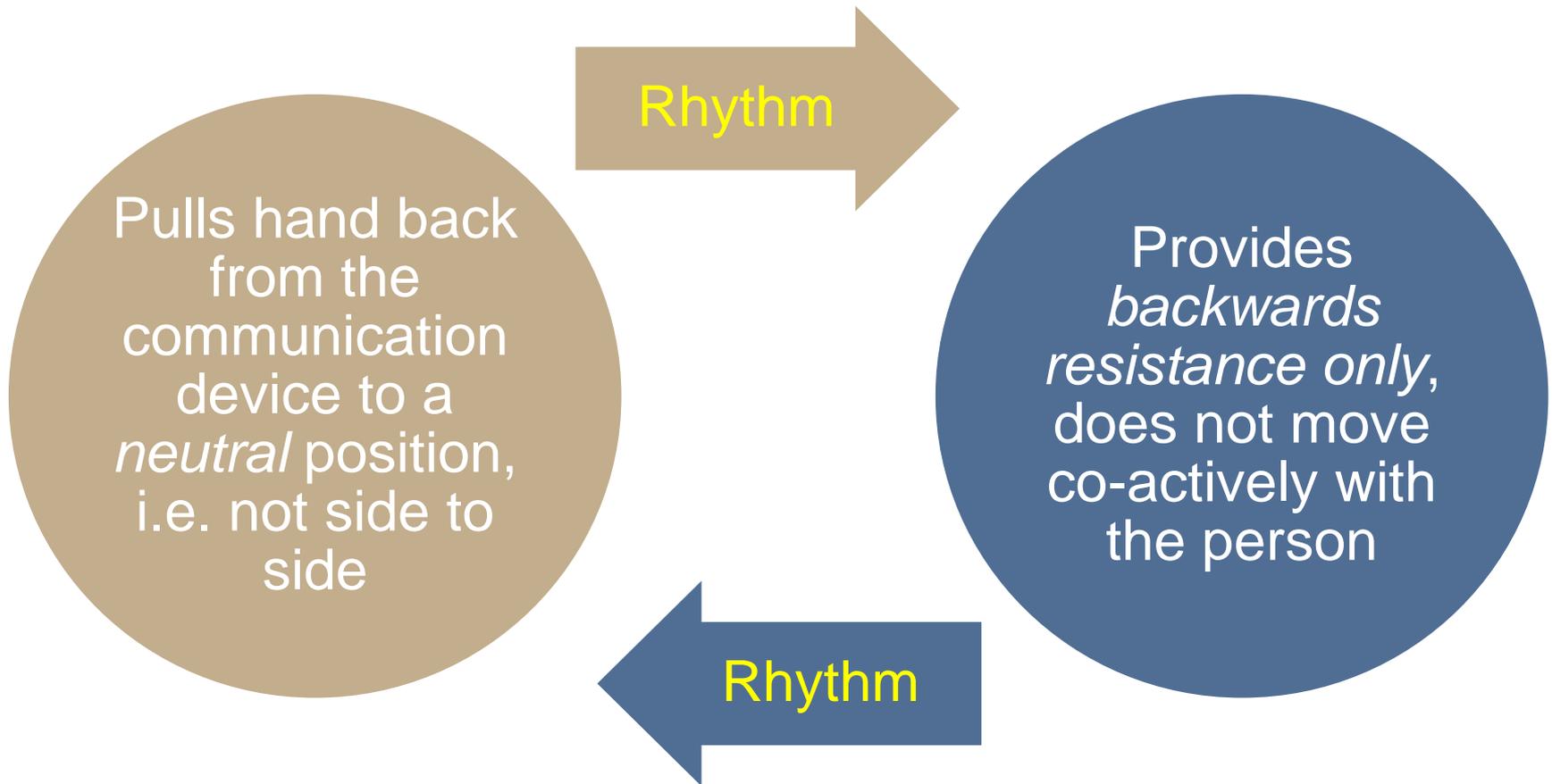
Best practice includes:

- Team commitment
- Multiple facilitators
- Access to experienced, skilled trainers for both initial and ongoing training
- Use of proper technique in the use of FC
- Integration of FC with other methods of communication
- Regular opportunities for the person to practice and use FC

Basic Elements of Support



Physical Support



Physical Support

- Provides minimal level support
- Creates opportunities for pointing with less physical support
- **NO GUIDING** - waits for the person to initiate the movement

Physical Support

- Regularly monitors whether the person is looking at the communication device



Physical Support

- Positions the communication device at an accessible angle and height for the person
- Establishes seating position that supports person's posture and movement



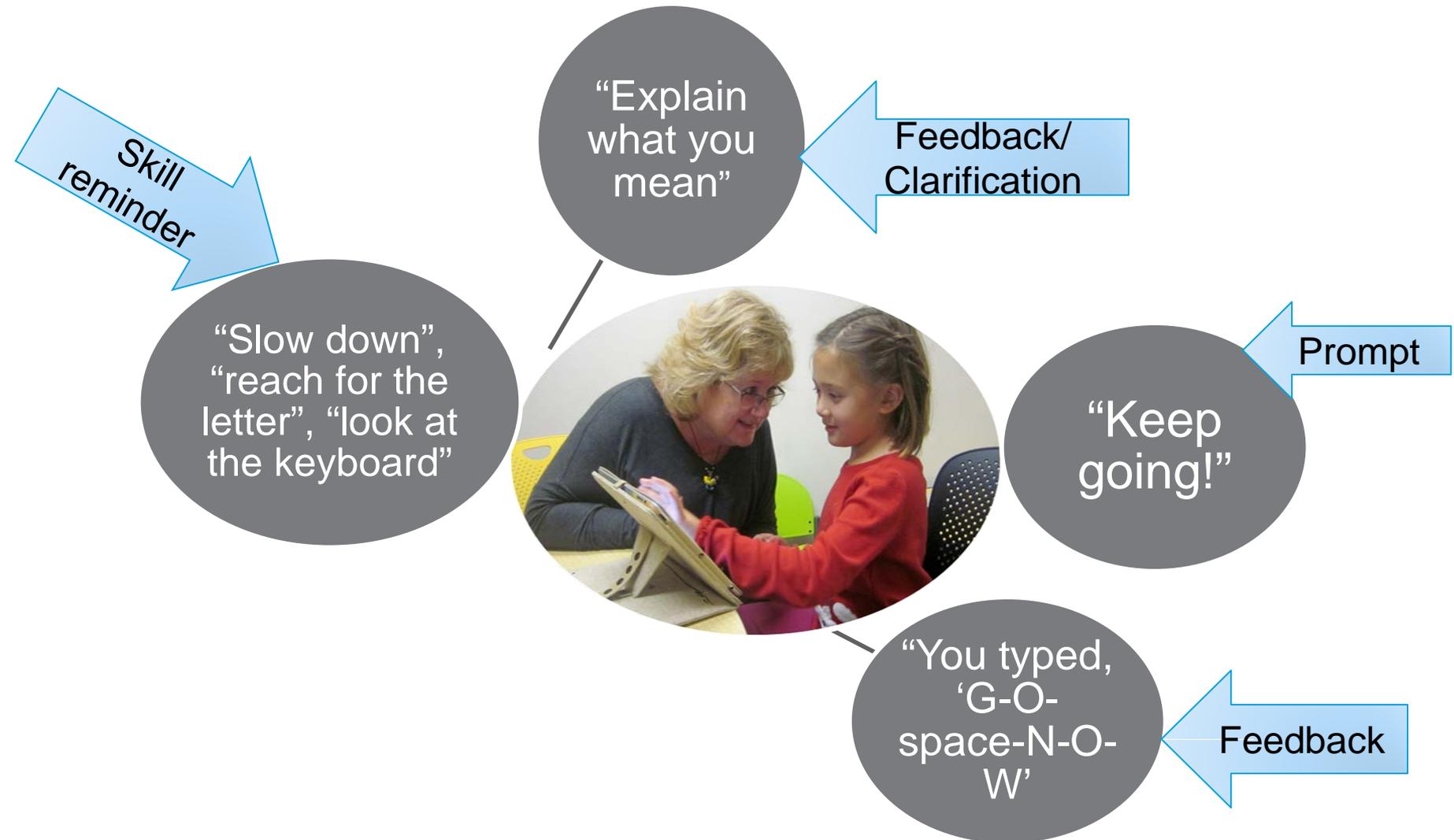
Physical Support

- Monitors pace and rhythm of person's pointing movement and adjusts physical support to accommodate changes:
 - uses more backwards pressure to slow the person down if they begin pointing too rapidly
 - pulls the person's hand back and brings to a pause to interrupt the pattern of hitting the same selection over and over (perseveration)

The facilitator ***never guides*** the user, but rather pulls the arm back to a ***neutral position*** above the target whether it is a keyboard or pictures. The facilitator might also intermittently take a hand away so the person feels he is able to do it with minimal support.

Sue Rubin

Communication support



**I REALLY
LIKE WHAT YOU
ARE DOING,
KEEP UP THE
GOOD WORK**

In addition to physical support, the communication partner may provide emotional encouragement, and a variety of communication supports (e.g. verbal prompts and feedback)

Goals for facilitated communication training



The goal of facilitated communication training is independent communication, i.e. pointing and typing

Levels of support → Independence



Photos – Institute on Communication and Inclusion

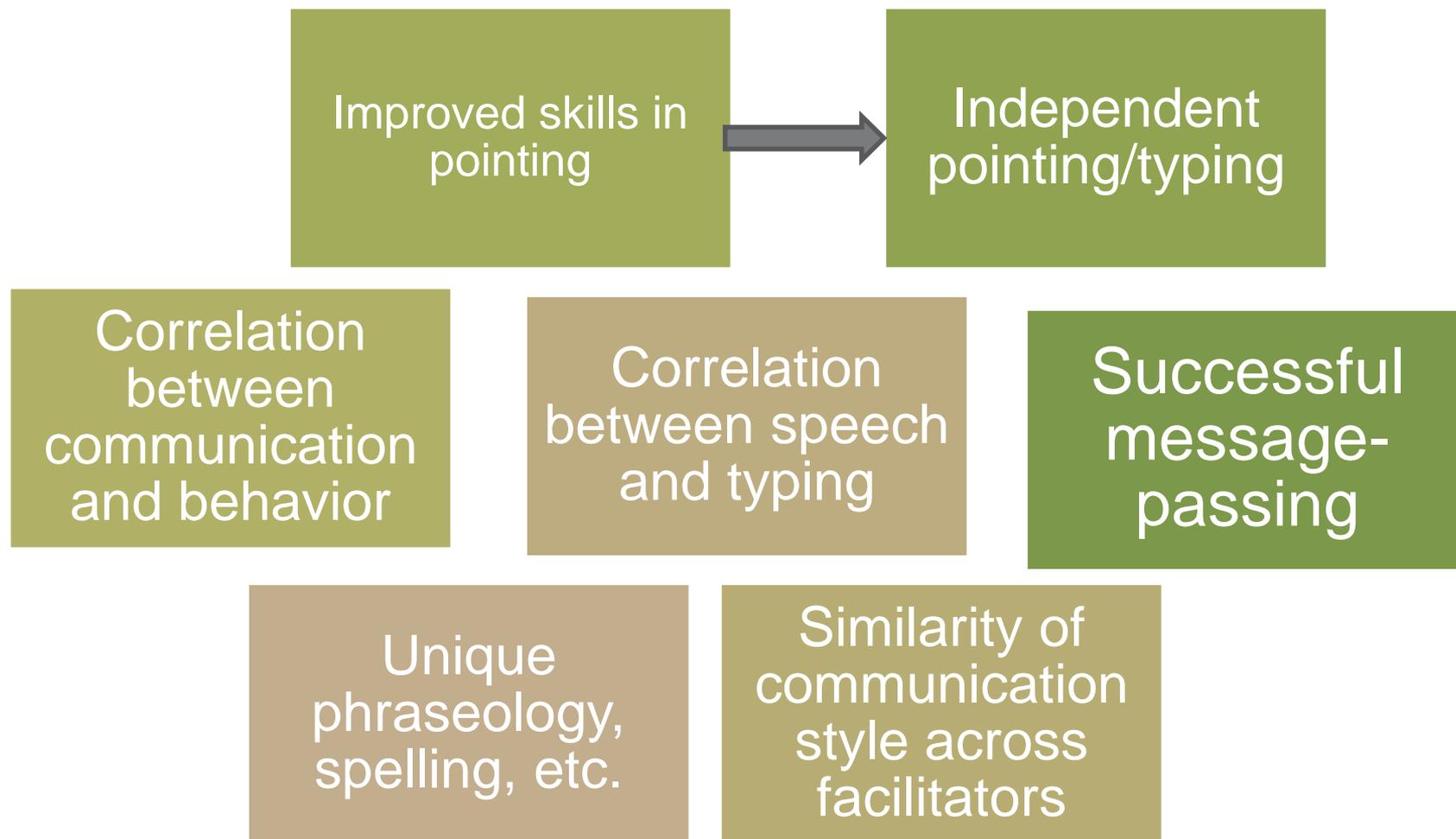
Pointing and related skills that can be improved through the use of FC

- Index finger isolation and extension
- Visual focus
- Accuracy of pointing
- Upright seating position
- Development of deliberate rhythm
- Maintaining slow, even movement
- Decreasing impulsive or automatic movement
- Initiating movement
- Organization of movements – arm/hand positioning
- Attention to task

Communication skills

- Language and literacy skill development
- Message formulation
- Clarification of messages
- Conversation skills in social situations
- Conveying information unknown to facilitators –message passing
- Use of punctuation, space and delete keys on boards and devices.

What can be documented



Institute on Communication and Inclusion at Syracuse University

<http://www.inclusioninstitutes.org/fci/>