

'Walling' A way to grow AAC Culture and AAC skills in communities

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Short Abstract

It's essential for everyone involved with an AAC user to grasp their unique combination of communication expressions, and needs. This task can be quite challenging for parents, especially with a large therapy team, different learning environments and supporters involved. Effective understanding and collaboration among these individuals are vital for reaching shared goals efficiently and successfully and ultimately enhancing the AAC user's experience and outcomes.

Walling is a project management tool that I, parent of an AAC user, have adapted as a collaborative, living webpage for my daughter Wilma. Walling is a fully customisable webpage where you can upload videos, photos, links and text into various sections. Walling is private and only people invited can view and edit the page.

Wilma's Wall is a space where Wilma, her therapy & education teams and I can brainstorm, strategize, and document innovative ideas for tracking and improving care, ask questions, share knowledge and celebrate Wilma. Wilma's Wall is a community capacity building tool that can be shared with kinder, school and friends. It champions the alternative imaginings of Wilma and grows a culture where her multimodal communication skills are valued, embraced, desired and experienced by all her peers.

This presentation will explore all the ways Walling has contributed to those around Wilma understanding her, and her PODD15 AAC device, and some of the feedback I have received from the team members who are connected to the page. This session is practical for clinicians and parents who may be searching for a similar tool.

Long Abstract

It's essential for everyone involved with an AAC user to grasp their unique combination of communication expressions, and needs. This task can be quite challenging for parents, especially with a large therapy team, different learning environments and supporters involved. Effective understanding and collaboration among these individuals are vital for reaching shared goals efficiently and successfully and ultimately enhancing the AAC user's experience and outcomes.

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Walling lets me share knowledge and skills about Wilma and her PODD15 AAC device. I upload screen recordings of Wilma's AAC as modelling tools for educators. I share videos of Wilma's various modes of communication and add text identifying what Wilma is communicating and the broader AAC cultural concepts depicted in the video, for example, identifying wait time, consent and attributing meaning. Walling is also terrific for displaying images of healthy language habits and flow charts, for example daily checks for educators that promote consent, communication, modelling and connection and, what to do when we don't quite understand what Wilma is communicating. As an added incentive for Wilma's kinder and daycare educators to engage with AAC culture I used the drawntoAAC illustrations and canva.com to design stationary, stickers, magnets, mugs and tote bags with the healthy language habits and daily checks as gifts. The images and colours in the gift designs are reflected in Wilma's Wall.

Walling is also a great place to post AAC tutorials and troubleshooting videos. I've uploaded tutorials on how to turn the device on, enter the passcode, which app to select, activate/deactivate guided access, edit a page set, understand and learn the 'main page' and how to charge with the portable power bank. Troubleshooting videos include what to do then the device freezes.

Training Resources can be posted on the wall too. I've included some links and videos from the Communication Hub on Wilma's Wall plus links to free webinars from AssistiveWare and Two Way Street resources. And a task manager is also really useful, such as assigning a task of adding Aided Language Displays to the kinder yard. Or posting suggestions for suitable lunchboxes or low cost items like chairs and writing supports.

Wilma is only 4years old now, but as she gets older she will be in control of the content on her wall and decide who has access to it. It has great potential as a tool for future NDIS planning meetings. The feedback from the team connected to Wilma's wall is overwhelmingly positive. An exciting space to be a part of learning and understanding more about who Wilma is, how she communicates and how best to support Wilma in her big and exciting life.