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OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM SPEECH-LANGUAGE & AUDIOLOGY CANADA (SAC)

Use of Facilitated Communication and Rapid Prompting Method

SAC does not support use of facilitated communication and/or rapid prompting method by its members and associates in clinical practice.

Facilitated communication (FC), also known as supported typing, involves the use of a facilitator to guide a person with a communication disorder in typing his or her thoughts. Rapid prompting method (RPM) is a related method where a facilitator elicits a response from a nonverbal person using a series of intensive prompts.

Consistent with SAC's Code of Ethics, SAC members and associates are required to engage in responsible practice of their professions by providing services and information supported by current scientific and professional research. There is a lack of substantive research evidence demonstrating that FC and RPM are valid forms of augmentative or alternative communication (Boynton, 2012; Schlosser, Balandin, Hemsley, Iacono, Probst, & von Tetzchner, 2014; Hemsley, 2016). Research studies show that facilitators consciously and/or unconsciously influence the message being communicated (Schlosser et al., 2014), thereby exposing people with communication disorders to risk of harm by preventing genuine self-expression (Travers, Tincani, & Lang, 2016). For these reasons, SAC members and associates should not use FC and RPM in clinical practice.

References

Hemsley, B. (2016). Evidence does not support the use of Rapid Prompting Method (RPM) as an intervention for students with autism spectrum disorder and further primary research is not justified. *Evidence-Based Communication and Intervention, 10*(3-4), 122-130.

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Todd, J. T. (2012). The moral obligation to be empirical: Comments on Boynton's "Facilitated Communication - what harm can it do: Confessions of a former facilitator". *Evidence-Based Communication Assessment and Intervention, 6*, 36-57.

Travers, J. C., Tincani, M. J., & Lang, R. (2014). Facilitated communication denies people with disabilities their voice. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 39*(3), 195-202.

About SAC

Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) is a member-driven organization that supports and promotes the professions of more than 6,400 members and associates. We are the only national organization passionately supporting and representing speech-language pathologists, audiologists and communication health assistants inclusively. Through this support, we champion the needs of people with communication disorders. Visit www.sac-oac.ca to learn more.

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