Creating Clarity: Using Handheld Devices as Cognitive Aids

Jeffrey Mega
Rehabilitation Technology Specialist
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
Dothan, Alabama
- Intro
- Cognitive Impairments
- AT for Cognitive Issues
- Helpful Apps
- Resources / Questions
- M.S. Bioengineering, Clemson Univ.
- Worked for 3-years in Motion Analysis Lab at Shriners Hospital in Greenville, SC
- Working with ADRS for 13 years
- I work with:
  - Children's Rehab.
  - Vocational Rehab.
  - Independent Living
- Currently cover:
  - 12 counties
  - Offices in Dothan, Troy, & Andalusia
Cognitive Impairment

- Disturbance in brain function resulting from:
  - Traumatic Brain Injury
  - Autism
  - Cerebral Palsy
  - Down Syndrome
  - Developmental Disability
    - Stroke
    - Illness
Cognitive Issues

- Problems with memory
- Slower processing
- Problems with task sequencing
- Difficulty multi-tasking
- Easily distracted
Cognitive Issues

- Problems with behavior
- Difficulties with speech
- Easily frustrated
- Sensory issues
- Physical deficits
What is AT for Cognitive Issues

- Any Assistive Technology that promotes greater independence by enabling an individual to perform tasks that they were formerly unable to accomplish or had great difficulty accomplishing.

- Small AT strategies can significantly change the individual’s life.
AT as Cognitive Aid

- Automated reminders
- Create to do lists
- Aid with task sequencing
- Improve time management
- GPS to aid with finding their way
- Health management
Types of AT – Cognitive Aids

- **Low tech**
  - Reducing distractions
  - Reduce clutter
  - To-Do lists to check as completed
  - Use calendars and/or sticky notes
  - Record meetings
  - Color coding
Types of AT – Cognitive Aids

- High Tech
  - Basic cell phone
  - Smartphone
  - iPod Touch
  - iPad
  - Tablet
Basic Cell Phone

- Speed dial
- Contact list
- Calendar reminders
- Camera
- Don’t have to worry about data plans
Smartphones

- Same features as basic cell phone with greater functionality
- Can add apps
- GPS feature
- Small screen size can make difficult for some to view and/or access
iPod Touch

- About the same size as an iPhone without the phone capability
iPad

- Larger screen size for easier viewing and access
- Louder speaker
- Accessibility features
- Greater number of apps available
Tablets

- Different sizes
- Different operating systems
- Typically has comparable apps when compared to iPad
Deciding What Device Is Best

- Functional vision
- Can they hear the alarm
- Dexterity to use
- Ability to respond to prompts
- Low frustration tolerance
- Interest in using device
Any Other Considerations

- Safe transport of the device
- Keep screen clutter down
- Additional speakers
- Keyboard
After Appy Hour Seems Like An Apt Time to Discuss Apps

WAFFLE HOUSE
Because the poor decisions you made the night before weren’t enough

EpicDemotivational.com
Corkulous

- Taking the sticky note to the next level
AudioNote

- Sync audio recordings to text you enter
- Type or write
- Highlight text
- Insert photo
Pill Monitor

- Create medication reminders
- Creates a log detailing medicine intake
30/30

- Create task lists with timer and alerts
Resources

- Job Accommodation Network – Job Accommodations for People with Cognitive Impairment (EAP Series)
- Tony Gentry – Using a Handheld Computer as a Cognitive-Behavioral Tool (Virginia Commonwealth University’s Autism Center for Excellence).
Questions / Discussion