



Develop personal safety skills by:

- Encouraging in the AAC user a sense of personal privacy for his/her body during intimate hygiene routines, as well as a sense of personal property and space
- Discussing with the AAC user appropriate boundaries and touch with strangers, acquaintances, friends, etc.
- Supporting the AAC user in learning safety skills in the community
- Teaching safety in all aspects of daily living – protecting personal property, wheelchair driving etc. See www.accpc.ca for resources
- Discussing imagined and real-life scenarios where the AAC user's safety might be at risk, and assisting her/him in determining what actions s/he could take. Ensure that s/he has the communication tools and skills to take action
- Discussing abuse in an age appropriate manner
- Finding out about abuse and guidelines for responding to abuse on the Speak Up website.



For more information: www.aacsafeguarding.ca

The Speak Up Project Safeguarding People who use Augmentative Communication from Sexual Abuse

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Promoting Healthy Sexuality and Safeguarding in Youth who Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

You can reduce the risk of abuse for youth who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) by:

- Encouraging the development of self-advocacy skills, self esteem and confidence
 - Providing information about sexuality and abuse
 - Providing the means and opportunity to communicate about sexuality and abuse
 - Teaching safety skills to children and youth who use AAC.
- People who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) have severe speech impairments and communicate by using devices or communication displays.



Support the development of self-advocacy and assertiveness by:

- Providing opportunities to make choices
- Encouraging the AAC user to make decisions and solve problems
- Encouraging and accepting the AAC user's right to communicate "No"
- Acknowledging and talking about any uneasiness the AAC user may have about people
- Allowing the AAC user a sense of control by asking permission when providing hygiene care or lifting or touching any part of his / her body
- Supporting the AAC user in learning how to direct people who provide daily services such as dressing, assisting with meals, etc.
- Encouraging the AAC user to give feedback on how his / her services are provided.



Encourage self-esteem and confidence by:

- Using sincere positive language and praise
- Encouraging the AAC user to develop friendships so that s/he has a wide social network in place
- Giving consideration to introducing the AAC user to an adult mentor who has a disability, so that s/he has positive role models
- Always respecting the AAC user's rights and expecting the same from others
- Acting in a way that allows the AAC user to develop a personal sense of dignity.

For more information:
www.aacsafeguarding.ca



Provide information about healthy sexuality by:

- Locating resources about sexuality and people who have disabilities
- Providing opportunities for the AAC user to learn about sexuality in an age appropriate manner
- Not assuming that the AAC user knows the basics. Making sure that s/he knows about all aspects of sexuality.

Communicate openly and regularly by :

- Providing the AAC user with the vocabulary and support s/he needs to communicate about sexuality and abuse. Use the picture displays on the Speak Up website
- Being open to communicating honestly about sexuality. If you cannot do this, find someone with whom the AAC user can communicate about these issues.