Assistive Technology Support Service

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WHO WE ARE AND WHAT SERVICES WE PROVIDE:

In 2010, DDA began to explore technology solutions to increase the capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Our goal was to help individuals become more independent through the use of assistive technology.

In 2014, DDA created the first employee positions in the community living sector dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities through the use of assistive technology.

Since then, DDA’s Assistive Technology Specialists have trained more than 180 staff and clients on how to use the iPad as a tool. Following an assessment of each individual’s strengths, challenges, learning style, and the environment in which the individual performs tasks that are affected by the individual’s disability, the specialists write AT plans that include apps and solutions to support the client’s goals. These include educational, vocational, communication, organizational and daily living goals. For example, individuals can use iPad apps to manage chore lists, travel independently or cook on their own.

Over the past four years DDA has provided over 100 iPads to programs in order to support individuals with disabilities.

In April 2015, DDA celebrated the completion of the first round of an on-going series of iPad classes. Classes cover different areas and target a variety of goals that suit the client’s interests. The iPad classes range from an introductory three-day workshop to a six-month commitment.

Examples of iPad training include:

- Using a Maps-Transit app
- Organizing with a calendar and contacts
- Exploring apps for individual interests (social skills, daily living skills, education, communication, work skills, recreation).

Since 2015, DDA has provided communication assistance for adults who required an augmentative/alternative communication system. The aim of AAC is to provide individuals with a means of independent communication so they can maximize their ability to successfully participate in everyday environments. Since then, DDA’s Assistive Technology Specialist has trained more than 30 staff on the basics of TouchChat, Proloquo2Go, and EESpeech in order to become comfortable with personalizing the apps in order to meet the clients’ needs.

Since April 2016, DDA has hosted more than six assistive technology workshops for families of young adults with developmental disabilities. These workshops have provided hands-on information about Apps for Accessibility that provide support for clients and their families in obtaining and using technology to meet communication, educational, and recreational. As a result, the young adults have become more independent, are developing their potential, and are participating actively in daily life. Follow our calendar to learn about upcoming AT family trainings. These offerings are available to all DDA clients.
SAMPLE OF SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- Research, assess and support client’s use of assistive technology, including various iPad/ iPhone apps, picture communication systems, and speech-generating devices.
- Assess each client’s abilities, interests, and goals by reviewing client service plans, interviewing, and collaborating with staff and family.
- Recommend various assistive technology devices and software to enhance an individual’s abilities and independence.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate individual assistive technology plans.
- Support clients in achieving their educational goals, including literacy, math, and technology skills.
- Support clients in achieving their vocational goals, including travel, communication, and organization skills.
- Teach clients and their support staff, in small groups and one-to-one, how to use new devices using inclusive classroom sessions.
- Provide follow-up assessments and further training and support when necessary.
- Support individuals in the community and workplace as they utilize new technology.
- Work as a team consultant to create new apps that will support clients in the workplace.
- Hold assistive technology workshops for families of young adults with developmental disabilities.
- Design how-to tutorials and descriptive manuals for assistive technology applications as needed.