

AT for Dementia? Absolutely!

Judie Lee, IPAT Executive Director

IPAT and ND Protection and Advocacy entered into a partnership to carry out assistive technology educational/demonstration presentations and AT assessments. Activities focused on people experiencing substantial impairments to memory or thinking abilities due to dementia.

IPAT researched and developed training and materials specific to assistive technology and dementia. These were used during presentations to educate the attendees so they would become aware of AT solutions available for themselves, family members or a person they serve. IPAT funded the purchase of a range of AT devices to be used during the presentations and for demonstration. The 'AT for Dementia' training provided background information on dementia, hands-on equipment experiences and device demonstrations specific to AT for memory loss, safety and wandering.

Some of the lessons IPAT learned through this initiative include:

- There is a real need for this information NOW; which raises the question of how to find and disseminate this information at an earlier entry point;
- Reaching family members, especially the children of those diagnosed with dementia early on is a key to promoting safety through AT for the individual while simultaneously providing care-giver support;
- Proper dispensing of medication and the ability to connect with others in an emergency were needs identified consistently by those with a loved-one living with dementia; and
- The potential dementia has to overwhelm our health-care system and deplete our resources – individuals with dementia are expected to double by 2020.

There are a number of significant outcomes resulting from this partnership beyond the number of people trained and the individuals who received AT assessments. The IPAT Technology Access Centers have increased their inventory to include devices for people with dementia. These devices are available for people to borrow and try out in their own homes. IPAT staff now has the knowledge, materials and devices to train others in the area of AT for memory, safety, and wandering. IPAT will be sharing this information at the national Assistive Technology Industry Conference in January, 2008.

Training on AT for dementia is now available within North Dakota for families and providers by calling IPAT. As readers, you can make a difference by sharing this information with interested people in your communities. This will help everyone

become more aware of the potential AT has to help people with dementia and those who care for them.

Multiple Formats Explained

Adapted from – “Manager’s Guide to Multiple Formats”

Multiple formats are simply other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing. Some formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address specific user needs. Multiple formats give everyone a greater chance to access and choose information.

The following is a list and a brief description of a number of multiple formats that can be produced to meet the needs of a variety of users.

Large Print – Large Print publications use a set of guidelines that improve readability beyond standard design and formatting. This includes: a larger point size for characters; plus, the use of non-serif fonts; increased spacing, and improved contrast. There is no universally accepted standard for Large Print point size. A recommended standard for general publishing is 16 points for body text and higher point sizes for titles and subheadings.

Audio – Audio is the reading of text out loud by a professional narrator or voice synthesizer. It is important that the audio capture all of the meaning of the original publication. For example, all graphics and other non-text items must be fully explained in text to then be read by the narrator or synthesizer. Popular, portable, audio formats are cassette tapes, CD’s and MP3 players.

Electronic Storage – Electronic storage in the form of portable diskettes, CDs, DVDs, Zip disks and other storage methods is considered a multiple format. This is because it provides access for people who do not have Web or e-mail access.

E-Text – Electronic text or E-Text is simply a text file that contains all the original text plus text that describes any non-text content such as pictures, graphs, charts and/or any other visual component. When creating an E-text file use plain language, organize content by text headings not page numbers, keep track of non-text items by type and number (i.e., Chart 15, Photo 21 Audio clip 7), and save in a standard word processing program and in MS-DOS Text.

Multi-media – Multi-media production for computer users has become a popular way to package information in more appealing, engaging and interactive ways. Publications can be turned into mini-movies complete with sound, video, text and graphics. As a minimum, it is recommended that multi-media productions include the e-text equivalent to all audio and video information. Popular methods used to distribute multi-media products include CD’s and the Internet.

Accessible Website – An accessible Web site looks similar to one that is inaccessible except that its design and structure allows access regardless of what technology may be used by site visitors.

Some people with physical disabilities may be unable to use a mouse and consequently navigate a website using only a keyboard. Others may use voice activation. Site visitors who are blind may be using screen readers, or devices that can transfer text, forms and control buttons into audio or Braille. People with learning disabilities may be using text-to-speech technology to increase comprehension. Those who are hard of hearing or deaf may require a text transcript of any audio posted on a website. To be accessible, web design and structure must build in a means for text explanations of visuals and audios; have a means to download to diskette, and convert information to large print and/or Braille.

On-Screen Text – On-screen text converts the spoken word and other audio contained in videos, TV programs, Web-based multi-media and movies to text. There are different types of on-screen text: subtitling; closed captioning; open captioning; real-time captioning and web captioning.

Described Video – Described video provides all relevant action scenes and on-screen text (such as credits) to be described and/or read by a narrator in video, TV programming, Web-based multi-media and/or movies.

If one or more of the formats described would help you or someone you know access information more readily just request the information from the source in the format desired.

Assistive Safety Devices Distribution Service

IPAT was once again awarded a contract through the ND Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division, to provide assistive safety devices and services. IPAT will fulfill this contract by operating the Assistive Safety Devices Distribution Service (ASDDS). This program has been established to help state residents who are at least 60 years old, not living in a nursing facility, continue to remain safely in their homes.

Participation in this program is voluntary and is at no cost to the participant. Devices that can be provided to promote safety include, but are not limited to; smoke alarms, automated medication dispensers with an alarm and lock, electric jar openers, and uplift seat assists. For further information, contact Connie between the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST by calling 1-866-673-6703, 1-701-265-3165 or faxing 1-701-265-3150, or e-mailing crawls@ndipat.org.

CONSUMER CONNECTION

\$100 Uplift Seat Helps Keep Mother Safely at Home

On behalf of the family of Elizabeth Frederick, my husband and I would like to take this opportunity to say “thank you” to the staff at IPAT for the helpful assistance you offered us.

Our mother was well on the way to a nursing home when John and I attended a workshop for Seniors/Caregivers. After hearing IPAT’s presentation we visited the Technology Access Center in Bismarck. Mother was having a difficult time getting up and out of chairs without assistance. She lives alone in her own home, so this was presenting a problem. We were shown an Uplift Seat Assist, which is self-powered by a hydro-pneumatic lift. It is easy to carry around and can be used in any chair with arms. We thought it looked like it might be a good solution, so we rented this device for Mother. It proved to be invaluable.



Uplift Seat Assist

As a result of having been allowed to rent the uplift seat from IPAT to try with Mom, we were able to determine that this was the thing that she needed. We bought two! She uses one at her home and we keep the other at our home ready for her use. We have shared the value of renting equipment through IPAT with other caregivers in our area now that we know it is available. We have certainly appreciated the services we have received, and know this seat assist helped keep Mother living safely at home. We urge others to take advantage of IPAT’s services.

Sincerely,
John & Eunice Toman
FLASHER ND

FUNDING NEWS

Highlights of an Alternative Funding Source

Funding for assistive technology devices and services may not always be totally covered by traditional public or private funding sources. When this is the case, other funding source options do exist: health and disability organizations; service clubs or fraternal organizations; and, foundations or trusts. One organization from the health and disability category that provides direct financial assistance is showcased below.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS), through its fifty state network of chapters, offers a variety of assistance to over a million people annually. The North Central States chapter (that encompasses North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and certain counties in Minnesota and Nebraska) currently offers a needs based direct financial assistance program for its MS diagnosed NMSS members. An amount up to \$350 per person, per fiscal year (October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008) could be available if you're an eligible NMSS member. Allowable items under the program include any service and/or equipment needs a member might have, with the exception of medical care or medication.

Obtaining financial assistance through NMSS involves an application process that specifies the member's request, certifies their condition and equipment or service need (typically by physician prescription), and includes a copy of the unpaid bill or invoice. Turn-around time is often only a few days if all your paperwork is in order. The application can be downloaded from: http://nth.nationalmssociety.org/site/DocServer/Direct_Financial_Assistance_Application_2007-2008.doc?docID=26704

EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

RC-200 Phone + Able-Phone Voice Dialer



RC-200 speakerphone



Able-Phone 5000-200 voice dialer

Has the phone become a source of frustration for you? Is the thought of struggling with those small numbers on the keypad keeping you from using the phone altogether? The RC-200 remote activated speakerphone by Clarity might be the phone for you. Couple the RC-200 with the Able-Phone 5000-200 voice dialer and using the phone could be an enjoyable experience once again.

With just a few quick cord connections the RC-200 is ready to make its first call. In just a few more minutes of additional, well described programming, you can turn the RC-200 into a hands-free phone by using the accompanying wireless remote. The RC-200 stores 20 numbers and is a high-fidelity speakerphone with amplification.

The Able-Phone 5000-200 voice dialer installs between the wall and your phone. The voice dialer verbally prompts you for programming of up to 60 numbers. Once programmed, you can just use your voice to dial the number. After all connections have been made with the RC-200 and the 5000-200 a touch of the

remote and a spoken name can have you talking to family, friends, or emergency personnel in a matter of seconds.

You may qualify to receive the phone and the voice dialer for free through the North Dakota Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Service (TEDS). Contact IPAT staff for more information 1-800-265-4728.

IPAT wishes you and yours a wonderful Holiday Season and all good things in 2008.