

## Functional Communication Skills

Functional Communication Skills are essential for individuals with intellectual disabilities as they allow them to express their needs, wants, thoughts, and feelings effectively. In the Advanced Certificate in Behavioral Interventions for Intellectual Disabilities, understanding key terms and vocabulary related to Functional Communication Skills is crucial for implementing successful interventions and improving overall quality of life for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

1. **Communication**: Communication is the process of exchanging information, thoughts, ideas, and feelings between individuals. It involves both verbal (spoken language) and non-verbal (gestures, facial expressions, body language) forms of communication.
2. **Functional Communication**: Functional communication refers to the ability to communicate effectively in order to meet one's needs and achieve desired outcomes. It involves using communication skills to express wants, make choices, ask for help, and engage in social interactions.
3. **Expressive Communication**: Expressive communication is the ability to convey thoughts, feelings, and ideas to others through spoken language, sign language, gestures, or other forms of communication.
4. **Receptive Communication**: Receptive communication is the ability to understand and interpret the messages, instructions, and information received from others through spoken language, written language, or non-verbal cues.
5. **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)**: AAC refers to the use of communication devices, symbols, pictures, gestures, or other tools to support individuals with communication difficulties in expressing themselves effectively.
6. **Verbal Communication**: Verbal communication involves the use of spoken words or sounds to convey messages, thoughts, and ideas to others. It is a primary form of communication for most individuals.
7. **Non-verbal Communication**: Non-verbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, body language, eye contact, and other cues that convey meaning without the use of words. Non-verbal communication plays a significant role in understanding others and expressing oneself.
8. **Functional Communication Training (FCT)**: FCT is a systematic intervention approach that focuses on teaching individuals with intellectual disabilities functional communication skills to replace challenging behaviors. FCT aims to improve communication abilities and reduce problem behaviors.
9. **Prompting**: Prompting involves providing cues, hints, or reminders to help individuals with intellectual disabilities initiate or complete a task, respond to a question, or engage in a specific behavior. Prompting can be verbal, visual, gestural, or physical.

10. **Modeling**: Modeling is a teaching strategy where the instructor demonstrates the desired behavior or skill for the individual to imitate or learn from. Modeling can be used to teach new communication skills or improve existing ones.
11. **Shaping**: Shaping is a behavioral technique that involves reinforcing successive approximations of a target behavior until the desired behavior is achieved. Shaping is often used to teach complex communication skills in a step-by-step manner.
12. **Generalization**: Generalization refers to the ability to apply learned skills or behaviors in various settings, with different people, and in different contexts. Generalization is important in ensuring that communication skills are used consistently across different situations.
13. **Maintenance**: Maintenance involves the continued practice and reinforcement of communication skills to ensure that they are retained over time. Maintenance is essential for preventing the loss of communication skills and promoting long-term success.
14. **Response Interruption and Redirection (RIRD)**: RIRD is a behavioral intervention technique used to redirect and replace inappropriate or challenging behaviors with more appropriate communication responses. RIRD helps individuals with intellectual disabilities learn to communicate effectively in challenging situations.
15. **Functional Analysis**: Functional analysis is a systematic assessment process used to identify the function or purpose of a behavior. Understanding the function of a behavior is essential for developing effective communication interventions and addressing underlying needs.
16. **Antecedent**: An antecedent is a stimulus or event that occurs before a behavior and influences the likelihood of that behavior occurring. Antecedents can trigger communication responses in individuals with intellectual disabilities.
17. **Consequence**: A consequence is a result or outcome that follows a behavior and affects the likelihood of that behavior recurring in the future. Consequences can reinforce or discourage communication behaviors in individuals with intellectual disabilities.
18. **Mand Training**: Mand training is a type of communication intervention that focuses on teaching individuals to request or "mand" for desired items, activities, or attention. Mand training helps individuals with intellectual disabilities communicate their needs effectively.
19. **Tact Training**: Tact training is a communication intervention that focuses on teaching individuals to label or "tact" objects, actions, events, or concepts in their environment. Tact training helps individuals with intellectual disabilities develop language and communication skills.
20. **Intraverbal Training**: Intraverbal training is a communication intervention that focuses on teaching individuals to respond to questions, comments, or statements from others. Intraverbal training helps individuals with intellectual disabilities engage in conversations and social interactions.
21. **Visual Supports**: Visual supports are visual aids, such as pictures, symbols, schedules, and cue cards,

---

used to enhance communication and comprehension for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Visual supports can be valuable tools for improving understanding and promoting independence.

22. **AAC Devices**: AAC devices are electronic or non-electronic tools used to support individuals with communication difficulties in expressing themselves. AAC devices can include communication boards, speech-generating devices, tablets, or smartphones with communication apps.

23. **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**: PECS is a communication system that uses picture symbols to help individuals with limited verbal abilities communicate their needs, wants, and preferences. PECS is a structured and systematic approach to developing communication skills.

24. **Prompt Fading**: Prompt fading is a gradual reduction of prompts or cues provided to individuals with intellectual disabilities as they become more independent in using communication skills. Prompt fading helps promote self-reliance and generalization of skills.

25. **Chaining**: Chaining is a teaching strategy that involves breaking down complex behaviors or skills into smaller steps or components and teaching them sequentially. Chaining is often used to teach multi-step communication skills effectively.

26. **Social Stories**: Social stories are short narratives or visual scripts that describe social situations, behaviors, or expectations to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Social stories help individuals understand social cues, rules, and norms in different contexts.

27. **AAC Evaluation**: AAC evaluation is a comprehensive assessment process used to determine an individual's communication needs, preferences, abilities, and challenges. AAC evaluations help identify the most suitable communication tools and strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

28. **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**: A BIP is a personalized plan developed to address challenging behaviors in individuals with intellectual disabilities. BIPs outline strategies, interventions, and supports to promote positive behavior change and enhance communication skills.

29. **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**: FBA is a systematic process used to identify the function or purpose of challenging behaviors in individuals with intellectual disabilities. FBAs help determine the underlying reasons for behaviors and guide intervention strategies.

30. **Reinforcement**: Reinforcement involves providing rewards, praise, or incentives to increase the likelihood of desired behaviors or skills. Reinforcement is a key component of effective communication interventions for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

31. **Punishment**: Punishment involves applying consequences or restrictions to decrease the likelihood of undesirable behaviors or skills. Punishment should be used sparingly and in conjunction with positive reinforcement in communication interventions.

32. **Functional Equivalence**: Functional equivalence refers to the concept of teaching individuals with intellectual disabilities alternative ways to communicate their needs and wants effectively. Functional equivalence helps individuals replace challenging behaviors with more appropriate communication

responses.

33. **Sensory Communication**: Sensory communication involves using sensory input, such as touch, sight, sound, or movement, to facilitate communication for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Sensory communication strategies can enhance engagement and understanding in communication interactions.
34. **Joint Attention**: Joint attention is the ability to share focus or attention on an object, event, or person with others during communication interactions. Joint attention skills are essential for developing social communication and building relationships.
35. **Self-monitoring**: Self-monitoring involves individuals with intellectual disabilities observing and evaluating their own behavior, performance, or communication skills. Self-monitoring promotes self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-improvement in communication interactions.
36. **Peer-Mediated Intervention**: Peer-mediated intervention involves training peers, classmates, or siblings to support and facilitate communication interactions for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Peer-mediated interventions promote social inclusion, communication skills, and positive relationships.
37. **AAC Implementation**: AAC implementation involves the systematic introduction, training, and support of AAC devices or strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities. AAC implementation aims to maximize communication effectiveness and independence for individuals with communication challenges.
38. **Visual Schedules**: Visual schedules are visual tools that provide a structured sequence of activities, tasks, or events to help individuals with intellectual disabilities understand routines, transitions, and expectations. Visual schedules support organization, predictability, and communication for individuals with diverse needs.
39. **Transition Cues**: Transition cues are visual or auditory signals that indicate changes in activities, locations, or routines for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Transition cues help individuals prepare for transitions, reduce anxiety, and facilitate communication during changes.
40. **Social Scripts**: Social scripts are pre-written or visual prompts that guide individuals with intellectual disabilities in social interactions, conversations, or new situations. Social scripts provide structured language and communication support for individuals to engage effectively in social contexts.

By mastering the key terms and vocabulary related to Functional Communication Skills in the Advanced Certificate in Behavioral Interventions for Intellectual Disabilities, professionals can effectively design, implement, and evaluate communication interventions that support individuals with intellectual disabilities in developing essential communication skills, enhancing social interactions, and promoting overall well-being.