

Title: BARRIERS TO CHANGE FOR AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION USE

Keywords: speech language pathology, augmentative and alternative communication, counseling, readiness to change, self-efficacy

In recent literature, there has been a marked increase in importance placed upon understanding what factors both positively and negatively impact the progress made by a client and that client's family in response to speech and language therapy. Today, clinicians prioritize evidence based practice (EBP) when making clinical decisions, focusing on not only clinical expertise and best evidence, but also client and caregiver perspectives, or preferences (ASHA, 2018). In consideration of EBP for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), Beukelman and Mirenda (2005) in their book *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, note several Barriers to Participation which hinder a client or client's family from adequately accepting the use of an AAC device.

These barriers could be overcome faster and more efficiently through the use of counseling tools and counseling techniques. Specifically, training to determine current levels of self-efficacy will be used for both the training and application for speech pathologists in the West Kentucky Special Education Cooperative. The study addressed three questions, the identification of participant's competency in addressing negative attitudes toward AAC, competency in applying Readiness to Change techniques in treatment with clients who use AAC devices and how SLPs typically counsel stakeholders in the use of AAC. Upon initial review of the data analysis, there was a significant change in training participant's perceived competency regarding their ability to use counseling tools for AAC clients.

(250 Word Max)