

Item 10. Policy Position: Inclusive Communications

Aaron Carruthers and
Christofer Arroyo

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What We Will Cover

- Purpose
- The issue and key terms
- Current challenges
- Support, decision-making, and inclusive communication
- Why this matters to SCDD
- Proposed policy and recommended action

Purpose

- Build a shared understanding of individualized communication systems and supports, including spelling and typing to communicate
- Review current challenges
- Consider how inclusive practices apply
- Adopt a policy position that affirms SCDD's principles and guides staff advocacy, technical assistance, education, and systems-change activities

The Issue and Key Terms

- SCDD is hearing that some services are being denied and some communications are being deemed invalid because a person uses assistance to spell or type
- Individualized Communication System – the tools, methods, and supports a person uses to communicate
- Spelling or Typing to Communicate – using letters, words, or a keyboard to express thoughts, choices, and needs



The Issue and Key Terms, continued

- Communication Support – assistance that helps a person access and use a communication system, point, spell, type, or stay engaged
- Inclusive Practice – removing barriers so a person can participate and be heard, rather than being excluded because the way the person communicates is different from what others expect



Current Challenges

- Research findings, professional views, and lived experiences differ
- Communications dismissed based on method
- Services denied without individualized review
- Access, choice, and participation limited
- How does it feel not to be heard?



Support and Decision-Making Can Co-Exist

Supported Decision Making

- Support may help a person understand, weigh options, and communicate
- The person still makes the decisions

Inclusive Communication

- Using support does not, by itself, mean the communication is not the person's own
- Consider the person, method, support, and context
- Center the person's choice, authorship, and control

The main concern is automatically rejecting a person's communication instead of considering the person's individual needs and circumstances.

Why This Matters to SCDD

- Dignity and communication access
- Choice and self-determination
- Inclusion and participation
- Individualized consideration, not automatic exclusion

What We Want in a Policy

- Affirm access to individualized communication systems and supports
- Oppose automatic rejection
- Guide SCDD's work

In short: SCDD supports access to individualized communication systems and supports, including spelling and typing to communicate, that reflect each person's needs, preferences, and chosen ways of communicating.

Proposed Policy Position

SCDD recognizes communication as fundamental to dignity, self-determination, choice, inclusion, and participation.

SCDD supports access to individualized communication systems and supports, including spelling and typing to communicate, that reflect each person's needs, preferences, and chosen ways of communicating. SCDD believes services to support communication should be supported and paid for by the services system.

Proposed Policy Position, continued

Communication and services should not be automatically rejected solely because assistance is used or because the communication method is disputed.

Decisions should be individualized and consider the person, method, support, and context. The process should center the person's choices, authorship, and control.

Action Recommended

Adopt the proposed policy position on individualized communication systems and supports as inclusive practices.



QUESTIONS



Thank You

