LiveLife Therapy Solutions, Inc.
Specializing in Assistive Technology

Exploring Older Adults' Perceptions of Assistive Technology

As a result of this presentation, learners will be able to:

1. Describe barriers to use of AT by older adults and ways to overcome them
2. Summarize perceived areas of concern older adults may have related to AT
3. Address older adults' areas of concern related to AT
4. Use supports of AT adoption and use to promote effective practice

Barriers to Use

- Lack of affordability (1,5,8,10,11,12,14,16,20)
- Difficulty with phrasing of terminology (2,8)
    - E.g. "Hey Siri" "Alexa – What's the weather like today?"
- Lack of knowledge about device and features (2,7,12,13,15)
- Lack of confidence in use (3,13,16,19)
- Lack of training (5,13)
- Waiting until "the right time" (11,12)
    - Remember - AT can enhance the lives of anyone!
- Lack of congruence across platforms (13,15)

Addressing Barriers to Use

- Many barriers can be prevented or avoided
- Choose devices within budget and consider alternate funding as available
- Create guides to promote learning of concepts
- Ensure device users have access to training
    - Aim to promote feelings of confidence and knowledgeability
- Educate individuals about ways AT can help people of any age
- Use devices that "talk" to each other

Primary Concerns

- Invasion of privacy/"Always listening" (1,2,5,7,8,9,10,12,14,15,17,18,19)
- Sharing information with family without consent (11,19)
- External use of data (9,10, 11,12,15)
    - Desire to know who can access recorded information
- Desire to have a say in device design (9,15)
- Rapidly changing tech (7,13,16)
    - When will they need a new one? Can they keep up?
- Reliability (8,10,14)
    - Ability to consistently use device(s)
- Access to data recorded by devices (8,15)

Addressing Concerns in Practice

- Create an open discussion regarding concerns
- Prioritize privacy
- Person-centered care
    - Devices may work well, but do they work well for THIS person?

Case Study – Addressing Concerns in Practice (Fictional Case)

Bill is a 72-year-old male who lives in an urban MN apartment. He was recently in a severe MVA that resulted in a BKA of his right leg. Bill confidently uses a slide board for transfers to and from his manual wheelchair and uses crutches to go short distances within his apartment. Bill received a PT consult to address accessibility of his apartment. She recommended that he use a bath bench, hand-held shower head, Ring doorbell, and smart hub (providing voice control of lights and an automated door opener). Bill is ready to order the tub bench, shower head, and Ring. He sees the potential benefit of using a smart hub but wants more information about how to use it and how his data is used before he is sold.

- What can the PT do to support Bill in informed decision making?
- What other options may better suit Bill should he decide not to get a hub?

Supports to Use – Is it Something I can Use?

- Ease of use (2,7,8,10,11,14)
- Usable by or considers multiple people (caregiver and individual) if applicable (14,19)
- Confidence in use (4,10)

Supports to Use – Lifestyle Fit

- Value (4,5)
- Person-centeredness (4,9,10,14,16,19)
- Congruence with daily life (10,11,14)
- Inclusion of social considerations (10, 11,13,14,16)
- Aesthetically pleasing (10, 11)

Supports to Use – Is it Helpful to Me?

- Usefulness/usability (2,4,5,7,14,15,17,19)
- Personal functional concerns lead to increased openness (6,12)
- Perception of need/benefit (7,8,10,17)
- Potential to increase independence/autonomy (4,9,10,11,12,14,18,19)
- Enhanced feelings of safety (13,14)

Supports to Use – Do I Have What I Need to be Successful?

- Perceived support and resources (2,4,16,20)
- Social support/lack of stigma (1,4,5,10,12,16)
- Past tech experience (esp. high tech like smartphone or tablet) (4,6,10,12,20)

Key Takeaways

- While there are several notable barriers to older adults' adoption of AT, many of these can be combated by evidenced-based approaches
- Older adults' concerns about AT should be addressed early and often
- Known supports of AT use by older adults can be used by practitioners to enhance adoption and reduce likelihood of device abandonment

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