Assistive Technology:

An Introductory Training for the DDA Community

Developed by DDA's Technology First Taskforce

INSTRUCTORS GUIDE

This companion guide is designed to support instructors delivering the **Assistive Technology (AT): An Introduction for the DDA Community** training to DDA provider staff, Coordinators of Community Services, and other stakeholders, as appropriate, within the Maryland DDA system.

Contents

Training Overview

Audience:

- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)
- Coordinators of Community Services
- DDA Staff
- DDA Provider Staff
- Self-Directed Services participants and providers
- Can also be used with people with IDD, families, and other stakeholders

Training Length: 60–90 minutes

Training Goals:
By the end of this training, participants will:

1. Understand what Assistive Technology (AT) is.
2. Recognize different types of Assistive Technology.
3. Identify how Assistive Technology can increase independence and self-direction.
4. Learn how to explore and request Assistive Technology through DDA services.

Slide 1: Assistive Technology: An Introduction for the DDA Community

Instructor Talking Points:

- Welcome participants.
- Share your name and role.
- Ask: “When you hear the word technology, what comes to mind?”
- Validate all responses — phones, Alexa, wheelchairs, apps, etc.

Activity:
Quick show of hands — “Who uses technology every day?”

Slide 2: Technology is All Around Us

Instructor Talking Points

- When we talk about Assistive Technology, people often think about **specialized or expensive devices**, but that is not always where we should start.
- Many people already have access to **powerful technology in everyday environments**—smartphones, tablets, kiosks, QR codes, and apps used by the general public.
- Supporting someone to use these tools can increase **independence, participation, and confidence**.

Examples to discuss:

- **QR Codes in restaurants:** Many restaurants now use QR codes instead of printed menus. Staff can help someone practice scanning the code, navigating the digital menu, and ordering.
- **Social media:** Platforms like Facebook or Instagram can help people stay connected, follow community events, or communicate with friends and family.
- **Maps and navigation apps:** Learning how to use Google Maps or transit apps can support community travel and independence.
- **Phone reminders:** Alarms or calendar alerts can help someone remember appointments, medications, or daily routines.

Emphasize that sometimes the role of support staff is simply to **teach, model, and practice using technology that is already part of everyday life**.

Key message to highlight:

“Technology inclusion means helping people use the same tools everyone else uses.”

This approach supports **community inclusion, digital literacy, and independence** without always needing specialized equipment.

Slide 3: What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

Definition:
Assistive Technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product system that helps a person increase, maintain, or improve functional abilities.

Definition (Plain Language):
Assistive Technology is any tool or device that helps someone do something they might have difficulty doing on their own.

Examples:

- Communication device (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)
- Smartwatch or apps with reminders
- Visual schedule app
- Voice control software
- Adaptive eating utensils

Key Point:
Assistive Technology focuses on the **individual tool** that supports independence.

Instructor Notes:

- Emphasize: Assistive Technology can be low-tech or high-tech.
- Assistive Technology is about independence, safety, communication, and choice.

Ask: “Can you think of something that helps you do something more easily?”

Knowledge Check #1 (Multiple Choice)

Question: Which of the following is considered Assistive Technology (AT)?
A) A wheelchair
B) A smartwatch with reminders

C) Adaptive eating utensils
D) All of the above

Correct Answer: D) All of the above

Instructor Tip: Emphasize that Assistive Technology can be **low-tech or high-tech** and supports independence, safety, communication, or choice.

Slide 4:Welcome to Assistive Technology Plain and Simple Video

Play the video

Types of Assistive Technology / Categories to Explain:

1. Mobility (wheelchairs, walkers)
2. Communication (Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices, speech apps)
3. Daily Living (adaptive utensils, dressing aids)
4. Smart Technology (Alexa, smart lights, reminders)

Instructor Tip:
Pause after each category and ask for real-life examples from the room.

Low-Tech vs High-Tech

Low-Tech Examples:

- Visual schedules
- Pencil grips
- Weighted blankets

High-Tech Examples:

- Tablets with communication apps
- Environmental control systems
- Smart home automation

Instructor Talking Points:

- Low-tech is often inexpensive and simple.
- High-tech may require training and funding approval.

- Both are valuable.

Discussion Question:
“Do you think expensive technology is always better?”

Key Messages:

- Helps people make choices.
- Reduces reliance on staff.
- Increases privacy and dignity.
- Builds confidence.

Instructor Story Prompt:
Share a short success story (real or hypothetical) about someone who gained independence using Assistive Technology

Knowledge Check #2 (True/False)

Question: Low-tech Assistive Technology is less valuable than high-tech Assistive Technology.

Correct Answer: False

Instructor Tip: Both low-tech and high-tech Assistive Technology can improve independence; value is based on fit for the person, not price or complexity.

Knowledge Check #3 (Discussion)

Ask participants to share a real-life example of low-tech Assistive Technology that has helped someone.

Correct Answer / Tip: Visual schedules, pencil grips, weighted blankets, etc.

Slide 5: Examples of Assistive Technology

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Devices

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices include any tool that supports or replaces spoken communication.
- This can range from low-tech picture boards to high-tech speech-generating devices controlled by eye gaze.
- Some people use apps such as **Proloquo2Go** on tablets.

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices do *not* stop speech development — research shows it often enhances communication overall.
- The goal is communication independence and self-expression.

Key Emphasis:
Communication is a human right. If someone has something to say, we must provide the tools to help them say it.

Talking Alarm Clock and Reminders

- These devices promote independence with daily routines.
- They support medication management, appointments, and waking up on time.
- Reminders can be auditory, visual, or vibrating.
- Smart devices can be programmed for personalized prompts.

Key Emphasis:
Small supports can prevent major crises (missed medication, missed work, missed transportation).

Assistive Listening Devices

- These amplify or clarify sound in specific environments.
- Examples include FM systems, hearing loops, or personal amplifiers.
- They are especially helpful in meetings, classrooms, churches, or public events.
- They reduce listening fatigue and increase participation.

Key Emphasis:
Access to sound means access to information — and access to information means inclusion.

Adapted Phones

- Adapted phones may have large buttons, picture dialing, voice-to-text, or captioning.
- They increase safety and emergency access.
- Smartphones include built-in accessibility features that many people don't realize are available.
- Independence in communication reduces reliance on staff or family.

Key Emphasis:
The ability to call, text, or video chat independently strengthens safety and social connection.

Visual Schedules and Timers

- Visual supports reduce anxiety and increase predictability.
- They help with transitions and task completion.
- “First/Then” boards are simple but powerful tools.
- Visual timers make abstract time concepts concrete.

Key Emphasis:
When people understand what’s happening next, behavior challenges often decrease.

Electronic Magnifiers

- These enlarge print for reading mail, menus, or medication labels.
- Portable or desktop options are available.
- Some connect directly to a TV or tablet screen.
- Increased access to written information increases autonomy.

Key Emphasis:
Reading your own mail is dignity. Technology can protect that independence.

Simplified Remotes and Switches

- Simplified remotes reduce frustration and increase leisure independence.
- Switches can activate toys, appliances, communication devices, or computers.
- Even a single-button switch can open a world of access.

Key Emphasis:
Leisure is not a luxury — it’s part of a full life.

Adapted Keyboards and mice

- These support people with motor challenges or visual impairments.
- Options include large-print keys, one-handed keyboards, trackballs, or joystick mice.
- Access to computers supports employment, education, and social connection.

- Built-in accessibility features are often underutilized.

Key Emphasis:
Digital access equals opportunity — in work, relationships, and community life.

Close the slide with:

"Assistive Technology doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. It just has to match the person. When we focus on abilities, goals, and independence, technology becomes a bridge — not a barrier."

Knowledge Check #4 (Multiple Choice)

Question: Which of these technologies can help a person communicate independently?
A) Adapted phone
B) Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device
C) Talking alarm clock
D) Electronic magnifier

Correct Answer: B) Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device

Knowledge Check #5 (Discussion)

Ask: "How can small supports like a visual schedule or reminder app prevent bigger problems?"

Instructor Tip: Look for answers including **reduced anxiety, fewer missed appointments, and improved independence**.

Slide 6: What is Enabling Technology (ET)

Definition:
Enabling Technology uses electronic tools and systems to increase independence, safety, and connection.

Examples:

- Door sensors
- Medication dispensers with alerts
- Smart home systems
- Motion detectors
- GPS tracking devices

Key Point:
Enabling Technology often involves **connected systems** working together to create a safer, more independent environment.

You can say:
“If Assistive Technology is a single tool, Enabling Technology is often a coordinated system of technology working together.

Knowledge Check #6 (Multiple Choice)

Question: Enabling Technology differs from Assistive Technology in that it usually:
A) Is a single device
B) Involves connected systems working together
C) Only improves leisure activities
D) Cannot be combined with Assistive Technology

Correct Answer: B) Involves connected systems working together

Slide 7: What are Remote Supports (RS)

Definition:
Remote Supports are support service provided by staff from a remote location using technology.

Examples:

- Staff monitoring sensors overnight
- Two-way video check-ins
- On-demand support via tablet or smart device
- Remote coaching

Key Point:
Remote Support is about **how staff provide support**, not the device itself.

You can say:
“Remote Supports are not the technology — they are the service delivered through the technology.

Knowledge Check #7 (True/False)

Question: Remote Supports are the devices themselves that help someone with a disability.

Correct Answer: False

Instructor Tip: Remote Support refers to the **service provided via technology**, not the technology itself.

Slide 8: Maryland is a Technology First State

Start with the Big Picture

Say:

"On August 15, 2022, Maryland officially became a *Technology First State*. That means our state made a commitment — at the highest level — to think about technology as a primary support option for people with disabilities."

Pause and emphasize:

"This was not just a program change. It was a systems change."

What Does That Actually Mean?

Break it down in plain language:

Technology First means:

- We talk about technology early — not last.
- We consider technology before adding more staff support.
- We explore tools that increase independence and choice.
- We look at how technology can help someone live, work, and participate in their community.

Ask:
"What does 'live, work, and play' look like for you or someone you support?"

Explain "Framework for Systems Change" in Plain Language

Instead of reading the full definition, simplify it:

Say:

"This definition might sound complicated, but here's what it really means:
When someone is planning their services, we should *always* ask — Could technology help with this goal?"

Examples:

- Instead of reminding someone every hour, could a smart reminder help?

- Instead of staff turning lights on and off, could voice control help?
- Instead of relying on someone else to communicate, could a communication device help?

Emphasize:

“Technology is not replacing people. It is expanding independence.”

Connect to Person-Centered Planning

Key Message:
Technology First still follows person-centered planning.

Say:

“This does NOT mean everyone gets technology instead of support. It means when we sit down to plan, we include technology in the conversation.”

Remind participants:

- The person leads the decision.
- Technology must support their goals.
- It should improve the person’s quality of life.

Highlight Why This Matters

Explain the impact:

Technology First promotes:

- Meaningful participation
- Social inclusion
- Self-determination
- Quality of life

You can say:

“When someone can control their environment, communicate their choices, or complete a task independently, that builds confidence and dignity.”

Make It Practical

Ask the group:

“What is one task that takes staff support right now that *might* be supported by technology?”

Encourage brainstorming:

- Medication reminders
- Cooking timers
- GPS for travel training
- Visual schedules
- Remote supports

Reinforce the Takeaway

Close the slide with:

“Maryland becoming a Technology First State means technology is not an ‘extra.’ It is now part of how we think about services. We are shifting from ‘Do you need more staff?’ to ‘Could technology increase independence?’”

Optional Engagement Question

“If Maryland is committed to Technology First, what responsibility do we have as providers, staff, families, or self-advocates?”

Guide answers toward:

- Learning about technology
- Exploring options
- Documenting need
- Being open to innovation

Knowledge Check #8 (Multiple Choice)

Question: Technology First in Maryland means:
A) Technology replaces staff support
B) Technology is considered early, before adding more staff
C) Everyone automatically receives Assistive Technology
D) Only high-tech solutions are provided

Correct Answer: B) Technology is considered early, before adding more staff

Knowledge Check #9 (Discussion)

Ask participants: “Name one task someone currently needs staff support for that could be supported by technology.”

Instructor Tip: Look for examples like **medication reminders, cooking timers, visual schedules, GPS for travel training**.

Slide 9: Finding Assistive Technology is Easier than You Might Think!

Start with Reassurance

Say:

“Many people think finding Assistive Technology is complicated or expensive. The good news is — it’s often much easier than you think.”

Pause and emphasize:

“You do not have to figure this out alone.”

Every State Has a Technology Act Program

Say:

“Every state in the country has something called a Technology Act Program. These programs exist specifically to help people with disabilities explore and access assistive technology.”

“In Maryland, that program is called the Maryland Assistive Technology Program, or MDTAP.”

What the Maryland Assistive Technology Program Offers

Explain clearly:

“MDTAP has Assistive Technology Lending Libraries across Maryland.”

“At these libraries, you can:”

- See different types of assistive technology.
- Try devices before making a decision.
- Borrow equipment to test at home, school, or work.
- Talk directly with an Assistive Technology Specialist.

Emphasize:

“This helps prevent spending money on something that doesn’t work for the person.”

Try Before You Buy

Say:

“One of the best parts is that you can borrow equipment and try it in real life.”

Examples:

- Try a communication device at home.
- Test adaptive cooking tools in your kitchen.
- Use a smart home device in your own space.
- Trial a workplace accommodation before purchasing.

Ask:

“Why do you think trying something first is important?”

Guide responses toward:

- Comfort
- Fit
- Usability
- Confidence

Anyone Can Visit

Clarify:

“You do not have to be in a specific program to visit. Anyone can tour an MDTAP AT Library.”

- People with disabilities
- Families
- DSPs
- Providers
- Educators

“You can walk in, explore what’s available, and talk with someone about your goals.”

Make It Practical

If appropriate, say:

“You can click the link on this slide to see the list of Assistive Technology Library locations across Maryland and find one near you.”

Optional engagement:

“Has anyone ever visited an Assistive Technology lending library before?”

Show video of MDTAP Assistive Technology Library Tour

Key Takeaway

Close with:

“Technology First means we consider technology early — and MDTAP makes exploring options accessible and low-risk. You don’t have to guess. You can try, learn, and make an informed decision.”

Knowledge Check #10 (Multiple Choice)

Question: Which is true about Assistive Technology lending libraries?
A) Only people in DDA programs can visit
B) They allow you to borrow and try devices before purchasing
C) They only have high-tech devices
D) They do not provide guidance from specialists

Correct Answer: B) They allow you to borrow and try devices before purchasing

Slide 10: Things to Know

It Must Be Person-Centered

Start with this key message:

“Assistive Technology should always be person-centered.”

Explain in plain language:

- It starts with the person’s goals.
- It focuses on what *they* want to do.
- It supports independence, choice, and dignity.

- It fits into their Person-Centered Plan.

Say:

“Technology should never be chosen just because it’s new, exciting, or available. It should be chosen because it helps the person reach their goals.”

Ask:
“What is one goal someone you support has that technology could help with?”

You Don’t Have to Be ‘Tech Savvy’

Reassure the audience:

“You do not have to be an expert in technology to get started.”

Emphasize:

- You don’t need to know product names.
- You don’t need to understand all the features.
- You don’t need to be ‘good with computers.’

Say:

“Your job is not to know all the technology. Your job is to know the person and their goals.”

There Is No One-Size-Fits-All

Say clearly:

“There is no one-size-fits-all solution in Assistive Technology.”

Explain:

- What works for one person may not work for another.
- The same diagnosis does not mean the same solution.
- Preferences, routines, environments, and comfort levels matter.

Example:

“Two people might both need help remembering medications — one might prefer a simple pill organizer, and another might use a smart reminder app.”

Certified Assistive Technology Professionals Are Part of the Process

Explain:

“Finding the right Assistive Technology often involves working with a certified Assistive Technology professional.”

They help:

- Assess needs.
- Recommend appropriate tools.
- Provide training.
- Make adjustments if something isn’t working.

Reassure:

“You don’t have to figure it out alone. There are trained professionals who specialize in matching technology to people.”

Funding Is Available

Address a common concern:

“Cost is often the first worry people have.”

Explain:

“There are funding options available for Assistive Technology — including assessments, training, and devices.”

Examples may include:

- DDA services (when tied to assessed need)
- Medicaid waiver funding
- Vocational rehabilitation (for employment-related Assistive Technology)
- Loan programs
- Grant opportunities

Say:

“If technology supports a documented goal or assessed need, there may be funding options to explore.”

Key Takeaway

Close with this summary:

“Assistive Technology works best when it is person-centered, thoughtfully assessed, and supported by professionals. You don’t need to be a technology expert — you just need to start with the person’s goals.”

Knowledge Check #11 (True/False)

Question: You need to be a tech expert to help someone access Assistive Technology.

Correct Answer: False

Instructor Tip: Emphasize: Knowing the person’s goals is more important than knowing all product features.

Knowledge Check #12 (Discussion)

Ask: “Why is person-centered planning essential when selecting Assistive Technology?”

Correct Answer / Tip: Ensures **technology meets individual goals, promotes independence, supports dignity**.

Slide 11: Where do WE start?

Start with the Goal — Not the Gadget

Say:

“The first step is not picking a device. The first step is identifying the goal.”

WE is underlined because this is a team process

Ask:

- What is hard right now?
- What does the person want to do more independently?
- What would make daily life easier?

Examples:

- “I want to cook on my own.”
- “I want more privacy.”
- “I want to remember my schedule.”
- “I want to communicate more clearly.”

Emphasize:

“We always start with the person’s vision.”

Talk With the Support Team

Explain:

“Once you identify a goal, bring it to the team.”

That might include:

- The person
- Family members
- DSPs
- Coordinator of Community Services
- Provider staff
- An Assistive Technology professional

Say:

“This becomes part of the Person-Centered Planning conversation.”

Explore Options — Don’t Assume

Encourage curiosity:

“Before deciding what will work, explore.”

- Visit an Assistive Technology lending library.
- Ask for a referral to an Assistive Technology specialist.
- Try low-tech solutions first.
- Trial devices before purchasing when possible.

Remind them:

“You don’t have to know the name of the device. You just need to describe the challenge.”

Consider Assessment and Trial

Explain:

“Sometimes a formal Assistive Technology assessment is helpful.”

An Assistive Technology professional can:

- Evaluate strengths and needs.
- Recommend options.
- Provide training.
- Help document for funding.

Stress:

“Assessment helps prevent wasting time or money on the wrong solution.”

Document the Need

Connect to DDA processes:

“If the technology supports a goal, it should be reflected in the Person-Centered Plan.”

That documentation:

- Shows the assessed need.
- Connects Assistive Technology to independence and safety.
- Supports funding requests.

Start Small

Encourage action:

“You don’t have to change everything at once.”

Sometimes:

- A reminder app is the first step.
- A visual schedule makes a big difference.
- A simple adaptive tool increases confidence.

“Small successes build momentum.”

Close with this summary:

“Assistive Technology works best when it is person-centered, thoughtfully assessed, and supported by professionals. You don’t need to be a technology expert — you just need to start with the person’s goals.”

Pause and add:

“When we start with goals instead of gadgets, we make better decisions — and we build independence the right way.”

Knowledge Check #13 (Multiple Choice)

Question: When starting Assistive Technology, the first step is to:
A) Pick the most popular device
B) Identify the person’s goals and challenges
C) Purchase high-tech solutions
D) Ask staff what they prefer

Correct Answer: B) Identify the person’s goals and challenges

Knowledge Check #14 (Discussion)

Ask: “Give one example of a small Assistive Technology solution that could increase independence in daily life.”

Instructor Tip: Accept **reminder apps, visual schedules, adaptive utensils, switches**

Slide 12: SETT Framework

Overview of SETT

What to Say:

- SETT = **Student (Person), Environment, Tasks, Tools**
- Developed by Joy Zabala for **Assistive Technology decision-making**.
- It is a **structured problem-solving framework** to ensure the right match between a person and technology.
- Emphasize: Technology should **fit the person’s needs**, not just be trendy or available.

Key Emphasis:
The SETT process promotes individualized solutions — one size does **not** fit all.

S – Student / Person

What to Say:

- Gather information about the person's:
    - Strengths and challenges
    - Communication style and motor skills
    - Interests and preferences
- Consider learning style, motivation, and prior technology use.

Example:

- A person may have strong visual skills but limited fine motor control — so a touch-screen Augmentative and Alternative Communication device might work better than a small keyboard.

Key Emphasis:
Know the person first. Technology comes second.

E – Environment

What to Say:

- Look at the **physical, social, and instructional context**.
- Ask questions like:
    - Where will the device be used?
    - Who will support the person?
    - Are there noise, lighting, or accessibility considerations?

Example:

- A vibrating alert reminder may be better for a noisy workshop than an auditory-only alarm.

Key Emphasis:
Even the best device fails if the environment doesn't support it.

T – Tasks

What to Say:

- Identify **specific tasks the person needs to perform**:

    - Communicating needs
    - Accessing education or work
    - Completing daily routines independently
- Break tasks into **core and supportive actions**.

Example:

- Core task: Expressing choice at meals.
- Supportive task: Navigating an Augmentative and Alternative Communication app to select the choice.

Key Emphasis:
Technology must **enable meaningful participation**, not just function for its own sake.

T – Tools / Technology

What to Say:

- After analyzing person, environment, and tasks, consider:
    - What devices, software, or supports fit this match?
    - Low-tech vs. high-tech solutions
    - Flexibility and future adaptability
- Tools are **solutions**, not the starting point.

Example:

- Low-tech: Picture cards, adapted switches
- High-tech: Eye-gaze communication device, tablet-based Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Key Emphasis:
Choose tools **after understanding the person, environment, and tasks**.

Matching the right technology increases engagement, reduces frustration, and supports long-term success.

Trainer Wrap-Up / Discussion Prompt

Talking Points:

- SETT = roadmap for **person-centered technology selection**.
- Always start with **the person, then the environment, tasks, and finally the tools**.
- Encourage discussion with participants:
    - *Think of a person you support — how would you use the SETT framework to choose technology for them?*
- Highlight: **No technology is "right" for everyone**; context matters.

Knowledge Check #15 (Multiple Choice)

Question: In the SETT framework, which comes first?
A) Tools / Technology
B) Tasks
C) Student / Person
D) Environment

Correct Answer: C) Student / Person

Knowledge Check #16 (Discussion)

Ask: "How would you use SETT to decide which communication device fits someone?"

Instructor Tip: Look for answers that **consider person's abilities, environment, tasks, and available tools**.

Slide 13: Use the Assistive Technology Navigator

Say:

"If you're wondering, 'This all sounds helpful — but how do I actually figure out what to do next?' — that's where the Assistive Technology Navigator comes in."

"The Assistive Technology Navigator is a tool designed to help you explore and understand Assistive Technology services available right here in Maryland."

Type atnavigator.com in your address bar to get started!

Emphasize:

"It's like a roadmap for Assistive Technology."

Why It's Helpful

Explain clearly:

"There are many different types of Assistive Technology services — assessments, lending libraries, funding options, training, device vendors — and that can feel overwhelming."

"The Assistive Technology Navigator organizes this information in one place so you don't have to search everywhere."

What the Assistive Technology Navigator Does

Break it into simple points:

The Assistive Technology Navigator helps you:

- Explore different categories of Assistive Technology
- Understand what supports are available
- Identify funding options
- Learn where to go next

Say:

"It walks you step-by-step through the process instead of expecting you to already know what you need."

How to Use It

Explain practically:

"You start by identifying the area where support is needed — for example, communication, mobility, daily living, employment, or smart home supports."

"Then the Navigator guides you to:

- Possible Assistive Technology solutions
- Assessment resources
- Lending library options
- Funding pathways"

Reassure:

“You don’t have to be an expert to use it. It’s built to be user-friendly.”

Who Should Use It?

Clarify that it’s for everyone:

- Self-advocates
- Families
- DSPs
- Providers
- Service Coordinators

Say:

“Anyone involved in person-centered planning can use the Assistive Technology Navigator as a starting point.”

Connect It Back to Technology First

Tie it to the bigger message:

“Maryland is a Technology First State. The Assistive Technology Navigator is one of the practical tools that helps make that commitment real.”

“It helps turn the question ‘Could technology help?’ into actual next steps.”

Close with Encouragement

End with:

“If you’re unsure where to begin, start with the goal — and then use the Assistive Technology Navigator to guide you from there.”

Optional engagement question:

“What is one area you would explore first if you opened the Assistive Technology Navigator today?

Knowledge Check #17 (Multiple Choice)

Question: The Assistive Technology Navigator helps you:
A) Explore Assistive Technology categories
B) Understand supports and funding options
C) Identify next steps
D) All of the above

Correct Answer: D) All of the above

Knowledge Check #18 (Discussion / Action Prompt)

Ask: “If you were using the Assistive Technology Navigator today, what is the first area you would explore?”

Instructor Tip: Encourage **goal-based selection, e.g., communication, mobility, daily living, smart home supports**.

Slide 14: Video of Assistive Technology Navigator Demo

Show the video of the Assistive Technology Navigator.

Invite learners to follow along from their phone or computer and bookmark / favorite the site.

Slide 15: Judith Heumann's background and quote

Access to Technology Is a Human Right

Start With the Big Idea

“Technology today is not optional. It is how people communicate, learn, work, access healthcare, manage money, and connect with their community. When someone does not have access to technology, they are excluded from full participation in society.”

Frame this as a **rights issue**, not a luxury item.

Technology = Access

Explain that for many people with disabilities, technology is:

- Their voice (Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices)
- Their mobility (power wheelchairs)
- Their safety (sensors, alerts)
- Their employment access (adaptive software)
- Their connection to the community (video platforms, social media)

Without access, people may experience:

- Isolation
- Increased dependence

- Limited employment options
- Reduced safety
- Barriers to healthcare and telehealth

You can say:

“For many people with disabilities, technology is not a bonus — it is the bridge to participation.”

Civil Rights Protections

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Prohibits discrimination based on disability
- Requires equal access to public services, employment, and public accommodations
- Increasingly interpreted to include digital accessibility

Talking Point:

“The ADA is about equal opportunity. In today’s world, equal opportunity includes digital access.”

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Section 504 & 508

- Section 504: Prohibits discrimination in federally funded programs
- Section 508: Requires federal electronic and information technology to be accessible

Talking Point:

“Section 508 makes it clear — technology provided through federal systems must be accessible.”

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Requires schools to consider Assistive Technology for students with disabilities
- Recognizes technology as necessary for equal educational access

Talking Point:

“IDEA acknowledges that without Assistive Technology, students may not be able to access a Free and Appropriate Public Education.”

Olmstead v. L.C.

- Supreme Court ruling affirming the right to receive services in the most integrated setting
- Technology can support community living and reduce unnecessary institutionalization

Talking Point:

“Technology can be a tool that supports the Olmstead decision by increasing independence in community settings.”

International Human Rights Framework

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- Recognizes access to information and communication technologies as a human right
- Promotes accessibility and independent living

Talking Point:

“The global community recognizes technology access as part of dignity, equality, and participation.”

Technology Is About Dignity and Autonomy

Connect to person-centered services:

Technology supports:

- Self-determination
- Privacy
- Choice
- Control over daily life
- Directing services

You can say:

“When someone has access to the right technology, they have more control over their own life. That is the foundation of person-centered practice.”

Equity Lens

Emphasize:

- People without disabilities naturally access technology daily.
- Denying funding for Assistive or Enabling Technology creates inequity.
- Digital exclusion widens disparities in employment, education, and healthcare.

Key line for emphasis:

“Equal access sometimes requires different supports. Equity means providing what each person needs to fully participate.”

Closing Statement

“Access to technology is not about gadgets.
It is about civil rights, dignity, and full participation in society.”

Knowledge Check #19 (True/False)

Question: Access to technology for people with disabilities is optional and mainly for convenience.

Correct Answer: False

Instructor Tip: Reinforce: **Technology is a human right, linked to civil rights, independence, and inclusion**.

Knowledge Check #20 (Multiple Choice)

Question: Which legislation supports access to technology?
A) ADA
B) Section 504 & 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
C) IDEA
D) All of the above

Correct Answer: D) All of the above

Instructor Wrap Up

“Thank you for participating in today’s training. Remember, Assistive Technology is not about gadgets—it’s about **people, independence, and dignity**. Every tool, every system, every support exists to help someone achieve their goals, make choices, and participate fully in their community.

As providers, staff, family members, and self-advocates, our role is to **start with the person, not the device**—to understand their strengths, challenges, and aspirations, and then match technology that truly supports them.

Maryland's commitment as a Technology First State gives us the framework to **think creatively, act early, and explore options confidently**. The Assistive Technology Navigator, lending libraries, and certified Assistive Technology professionals are resources you can use immediately to make a real difference.

In the end, it's about building **independence, opportunity, and inclusion**—so that every person can live, work, communicate, and connect on their terms. Start small, think big, and remember: when technology is matched to goals and people, it becomes a bridge—not a barrier."

Additional Suggestions

- Weave in success stories with people who have benefited from specific technologies.
- Invite people with lived experience using Assistive Technology to co-facilitate the training.
- Consider developing a post-training knowledge check
- Invite them to tell their story or create a video to show in the training.
- Invite people to contact their local Assistive Technology library for a tour with people they support.
- Assign people to explore the Assistive Technology navigator with someone they support.
- Work the Assistive Technology Navigator into your PCP process.