Getting IT: Using information technology to empower people with communication difficulties

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Information technology (IT) has great potential to be an effective and empowering means of communication for people with communication difficulties. Getting IT explores how IT can help such people increase their independence, communicate in more direct ways and express themselves as part of society.

Authors Dinah Murray and Ann Aspinall examine common problems faced by people with learning and communication difficulties - being judged on appearances, encountering impatience from communication partners, problems identifying and understanding key information and difficulties communicating decisions. They show how IT can help solve these problems: for example internet search tools for accessing information at home, typing and email as socially neutral, universally acceptable modes of expression, anonymous, non-judgmental internet chatrooms and discussion forums. Three central case studies illustrate how IT improved the lives of Kumar who is on the autism spectrum, Marie who has dementia and Irene who is almost completely nonverbal. The book also provides practical guidance on how to use common IT programs including Powerpoint and gives an overview of the technology available for people with specific difficulties. Useful resources and organisations are supplied at the end of the book.

Getting IT shows the power of IT to help people with communication difficulties satisfy the universal human need to communicate. This book will inspire carers, teachers, psychologists, parents and other professionals to use IT with people with communication difficulties, and will expand the skills and knowledge of those who already do.

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