Effect of ModelER intervention on the communicative abilities of adults and children with Angelman syndrome and their communication partners.


There is known gap between what individuals with Angelman syndrome can understand and what they can express. Recent literature shows that individuals with AS can use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), both low-tech and high-tech. But, implementation of AAC brings challenges; how to include the entire environment, how to model AAC all day every day, and how to motivate individuals with AS to use AAC are common questions raised by parents and other caretakers. In our study we coach primary caregivers of individuals with AS to use the ModelER approach to enhance communication with and in the individual with AS. This approach consist of three pillars:

1) Modelling in all communicative functions, every day;
2) Encourage the individual with AS to communicate (with or without AAC);
3) Recast and respond, translate what the individual with AS is trying to say using body language, gestures or vocalizations and expand and respond to this message using AAC.

In our training program we conduct AAC assessment, co-create Communication Passports, aided language displays and Personal Experience Books. We conduct group sessions to explain and practice with the principles of the ModelER approach. Between group sessions, six home visits will be done to give coaching-on-the-job. During the time of the ASF conference the training program for the adults with AS will be finalized and we will present our findings and experience with this group. We will elaborate both on the difference in communicative capabilities as on observed effect on mood and behavior as a result of the training program.