AT Mentoring is a task transference program recognising the lived experience and expertise of people with disabilities who are trained and employed to guide AT selection. The role is applicable wherever there is a shortage of allied health professionals. AT Australia seeks to understand any similar activity and is available to work with and mentor those interested in task transference.

**AT Mentoring**

Recognising and valuing the expertise provided by the lived experience of AT use, this project developed a formal peer support role in the selection of AT that:

- formalised the informal decision making support practice already existing in communities but only for those with long-term disabilities;
- created a recognised 17 competency trade qualification: employment and career opportunities for people with disabilities and their carers;
- provided access to trained peers to assist in AT selection, decisions and choice;
- is designed to increase the capacity and confidence of people with disabilities to make decisions regarding their AT needs.

**What is the impact for AT users and other stakeholders?**

**AT users have or gain:**

- Access to a trained peer to: guide and inform AT selection; provide information on the breadth of AT available and where to source it; a peer to assist in any complex decisions with allied health professionals;
- A recognised training employment path with relevance across the sector: with vendors, with service providers and as independent providers;
- Skills and confidence in AT selection over time.

**AT Systems**

- Reducing the reliance on the highly trained and limited resource of the allied health professional redirecting this resource to assist those with complex AT needs.

**Implications for Products, Provision, Personnel or Policy?**

**Products**

- People with disabilities are supported by trained peers who assist in understanding the breadth of AT that is available, in identifying products that meet needs and where to find those products.

**Provision**

- People with disabilities lead, and are strongly engaged in, the selection of AT for themselves and for their peers.
- AT Mentors are able to be employed from and within communities, close to those who need AT, especially in rural and remote areas.

**Personnel**

- People with disabilities have access to a 17 competency, recognised trade qualification, covering all aspects of AT that is modular in its design.
- The qualification as a whole, or by individual competency leads to employment opportunities across the service system.
- There is a reduction on the reliance of available allied health professionals, freeing this key resource for assessment of more complex AT needs, especially where there is a shortage of allied health professionals, as in rural and remote communities.

**Policy**

The role of the AT Mentor exists within the AT Strategy of Australia’s National Disability Insurance Scheme.

**Implications for other aspects of the Global Research Agenda**

AT Mentors is a community development approach building a competent workforce of people. This in turn builds capacity of communities to manage AT selection for themselves. This increasing workforce of trained people with disabilities will be connected to others and their needs. This will enable engagement in innovation, research and education by providing knowledge on the needs of communities into the research agenda.

**Strategies to share and build global capacity based on this work**

Assistive Technology Australia offers to:

- share its process and results,
- share the competencies developed,
- assist any other agency in developing a similar role within their own context.

Assistive Technology Australia is also interested in learning from the experiences of any other agency, gaining knowledge from those experiences, adding value to our work.

**Contact point for global liaison**

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