

## A guide to self-advocacy

### 10 steps to help you select the right assistive technology (AT)

- 1. Identify** the problem or issue you are having, and consider what you want to change – if you could find the perfect solution, what would that enable you to do? Be specific in what you want to achieve and break down your needs into must-haves and nice-to-haves.
- 2. Learn** and speak with other people with similar challenges and find out what AT they use and what they like/dislike about their AT.
- 3. Research** what options are available, for example using supplier's websites, independent user reviews and checking in with your peers or an AT Mentor.
- 4. Seek professional advice** on available options from an allied health professional, such as an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.
- 5. Trial** the AT before you buy. Try to find one or two suppliers that stock all the options you are comparing, then arrange a time to check them out in person or coordinate a virtual video call if you can't visit in person.
- 6. Make initial communication your way.** You could email the AT supplier with what you are looking for before going in person. This way they are clear on what you want and can be prepared before you get there.
- 7. Don't rush.** Think about your choices overnight if your schedule allows it and find out if you can trial the item for a couple of days. In case of enthusiastic salespeople, it may be helpful to have a statement prepared to thank them for their help, reiterating that you need more time to consider and confirming when you will be in touch once you've decided.
- 8. Compare** AT solutions. Write a list with each of your options as a column heading, then fill in the rows with things you like and dislike, cost, and any other factors that are important to you (e.g., the weight of the AT, availability, warranty, and repairability).
- 9. Get Support** from others. Ask a friend, family member, or an AT Mentor to help you look at the pros and cons objectively, or to help you practice what you might say until you feel comfortable.
- 10. Be clear.** Explain how you feel and why it is important. It's good to use "I" statements when talking about how something impacts you, for example: 'I feel this won't meet my needs.'

\*This resource was co-designed with Nerine Williams and can be used as a stand-alone resource or in conjunction with the ['Comparing assistive technology \(AT\) - A tool to assist with self-advocacy and AT decision making'](#).