ATchat
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AT Chat Research: An Evidence Base for Peer Support

The AT Chat Navigation Program (formerly AT Chat Peer Mentoring Program) successfully integrates evidence-based foundations of peer support, assistive technology (AT) competency, and ongoing capability-building for AT Navigators (formerly AT Chat Peer Mentors) and AT users (formerly Mentees).

AT Chat is based on three building blocks of knowledge:

1) Co-design principles and methods.
2) Peer support evidence base.
3) AT Service Delivery best practice.

Building Block 1: Co-design

AT Chat uses the 'ladder' of participation to ensure AT users are involved in co-design and co-production of the peer support programs.

As AT Chat expands to employ AT Navigators to deliver AT peer support, we continue to climb the ladder of participation to co-delivery.

A key theme throughout all AT Chat co-design has been the AT community's desire for jargon free information and easier to understand service delivery steps.

Through rigorous exploration, experimentation and evaluation AT Chat tested user-friendly language and created the AT Navigation Program consisting of three stages, Connect, Create and Control.

Building Block 2: Peer Mentoring

The AT Navigation Program emerged from the co-design process. It is based on a model of peer support.
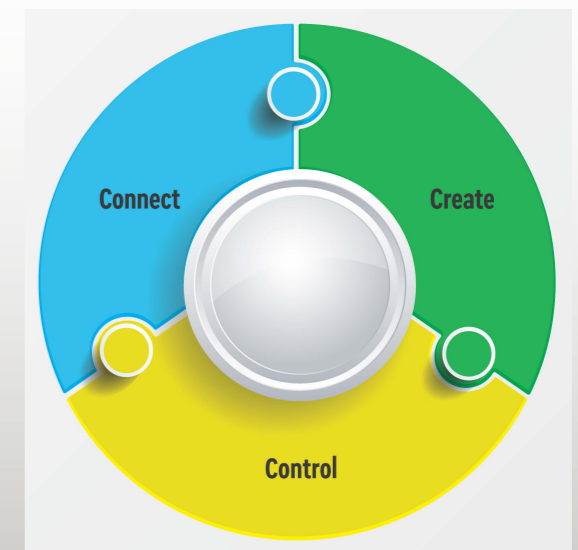
Connect: Let's chat.
It's the start of the peer-support relationship between the AT user and the AT Navigator.

Create: Set a goal and plan.
Discussions take place with the AT user to identify their current AT equipment, supports and needs.

Control: Compare and choose.
The AT Navigator uses the goal to develop a personalised AT Solutions Guide.


Building Block 3: AT Service Delivery

AT Chat used journey mapping to explore a range of AT pathways to determine the scope of an AT Navigator role within the context of the NDIS AT Complexity Levels and AT Service Delivery steps.

In summary the results suggest:
• An AT Navigator can undertake all service delivery steps when supporting an AT user to make decisions about Level 1 AT.
• An AT Navigator can also support an AT user to make decisions about Level 2 AT, depending on the personal scope of the AT Navigator.
• AT complexity levels 3 and 4 require an allied health practitioner and a health treating team may be involved.
• An AT Navigator can add value at all stages of service delivery across all NDIS AT Complexity Levels, within this team context.

The AT Complexity Pyramid
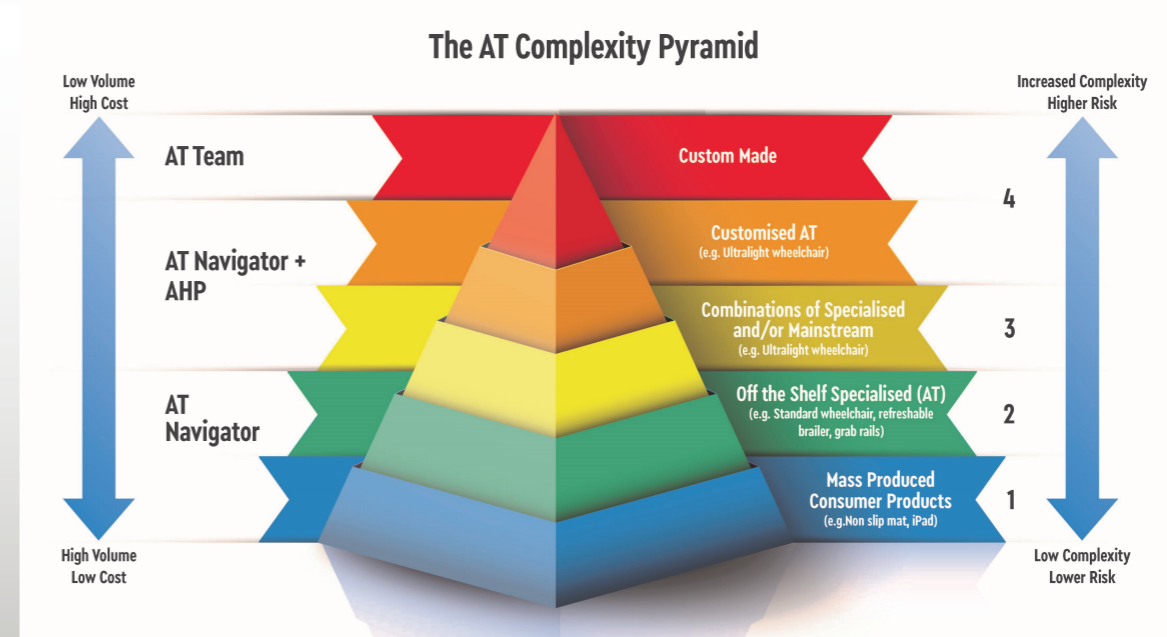
AT Chat Evaluation

The evaluation results of AT Navigation Program Pilot demonstrated:
• All AT users identified an increased opportunity to access unbiased information about assistive technology that was free from sales and marketing content.
• AT users demonstrated choice and control following the pilot regarding their AT decision-making.
• Following the pilot, AT users felt more empowered to independently source information, construct an AT solution, and make informed decisions.
• AT users also showed improved general self-efficacy, motivation, and belief in their ability to overcome challenges to achieve their goals following the pilot.