

Poster Session Language and communication

Poster Number: SAT01-59

MASSEMBLAGE : an Innovative Alternative Communication Solution

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Introduction Sensory sensitivity disturbances are a common symptom in autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and frequently lead to tactile defensiveness. MASSEMBLAGE is an innovative tool currently used for people with tactile defensiveness. The protocol consists in a tactile and structured sensory experience with specific material and communication tools. The method is fast, structuring, respectful and responsive to the feelings and only requires a 2-day initial vocational training. This study assesses users' expectations and the contribution of MASSEMBLAGE to people with ASDs as an additional tool to promote autonomy, tactile and social interaction as well as communication.

Methods MASSEMBLAGE has been taught to professionals working in the sector of special education and health since 01/2016. MASSEMBLAGE is applied in adults and children over four years of age suffering from ASDs. Between 05/2018 and 12/2018, each trainee was interviewed during the training session: Do you think that MASSEMBLAGE meets basic human needs, as defined by Max Neef, for the people with ASDs hosted in your center? Regarding MASSEMBLAGE contribution to people with ASDs, the changes in daily life activities autonomy, social anxiety, tactile and social interaction and communication were collected from qualified professionals trained to this tool from 01/2016 to 01/2019.

Results MASSEMBLAGE is identified by trainees (n=29) as a response to meet the needs of people with ASDs relative to leisure (79%), identity (74%), understanding (68%), participation (63%), freedom (63%), and protection (63%). Some basic improvements in personal care such as bathing and dressing, or in mobility have been observed. The most relevant results were obtained in people with ASDs having great learning difficulties and no capacity for tactile and social interaction or for verbal communication (e.g. let someone hold their hands to cross the road, apply sunscreen or treat wounds). 12th Autism-Europe International Congress – September 13-15th 2019

Discussion MASSEMBLAGE obtained a significant global satisfaction rate from psychomotor therapists, educators, nurses and masseurs as a comprehensive tool in the management of ASDs. Henceforth, some patients receiving such care are available and able to respond to some preventive and secure solicitations, which was previously impossible. These results have been attributed to a significant reduction of anxiety thanks to MASSEMBLAGE which facilitates care receivers' learning and contributes to the overall support of people with tactile defensiveness including people with ASDs.

Keywords: Alternative Communications, Challenging Behaviour, Vocational Training