



Show Notes - Episode #30

Project-based interventions in LPAA with Melissa Capo

Jerry Hoepner, a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, speaks with Melissa Capo about PEP Talks and project-based interventions.

Melissa Capo is the developer of PEPtalks and clinical supervisor at the College of St. Rose. Melissa was fortunate to be a long-time colleague of Dr. Mark Ylvisaker, a profound influence on so much of the work we do with adults and adolescents with acquired neurogenic disorders like traumatic brain injury and aphasia. While not explicitly linked to the LPAA approach, his tenets of authentic, person-centered interventions where everyday partners and persons with aphasia or TBI are viewed as collaborators and experts is central to an LPAA approach. Building upon her collaborations with Mark, Melissa has been an innovative advocate for project-based interventions, publishing sentinel work in that area with Drs. Feeney and Ylvisaker in 2007.

In today's episode you will:

- Learn about applications of project-based interventions for persons with aphasia and related disorders.
- Examine the framework for project-based interventions.
- Learn about PEP Talks, positive-educational-peer reviewed videos for persons with brain injury by persons with brain injury.
- Gain insight into the importance of supporting individuals to identify and carry out projects to the fullest extent possible.

Show Highlights and Key Points:

- Melissa shares about her influences and mentorship, including long-time collaborator-mentor, Mark Ylvisaker. These ideals emphasize the importance of person-driven goals, authentic contexts, and authentic partners.
- Learn about **applications of project-based interventions** for persons with aphasia, traumatic brain injury, and a variety of neurologic impairments.
- The **framework for project-based interventions** includes these key elements:



- **Produces a concrete product or artifact**, using the skills of communication, cognition, and behavior within an authentic, meaningful context
- Results from long-term investigation or deeper research, which **takes place over a period of time**, not just a single session
- **Collaborative interactions** with different people and interactions with different resources
- Motivated by a meaningful theme, topic, or question identified by the individual
- The **person takes on the expert role** - either because they have expertise or they need to gain expertise in an area
- Takes place **across people and services** (i.e., SLP, occupational therapist, counselor, aide, physical therapist, everyday communication partner)
- The **end product is designed to help other people** - this is at the core of motivation and rebuilding self-worth and identity
- The **importance of patience** in project-based intervention - having the individuals do as much of the project as possible. It is in our nature to want to support people when they struggle but sometimes that leads us to provide more support than is necessary. Further, we often have an artificial timeline that pressures us to move projects along. When we do this, we take part of the project and the learning that comes with it out of the individual's hands.
- Melissa discusses her work on PEP Talks as a project-based intervention
 - PEP Talks stands for Positive-Educational-Peer reviewed talks
 - PEP Talks are both a collaborative group intervention and a topic-based video series, loosely following the framework of TED Talks
 - Produces videos for a YouTube channel that produces videos FOR persons with aphasia and related disorders BY persons with aphasia and related disorders
 - Ideally, the topics are typically not addressed in more traditional therapy but are relevant to their everyday lives
 - The process, being involved in every aspect from start to finish, is where the learning happens. This includes identifying topics, researching and planning for the talk, recording the video, editing the video, to producing and releasing the video.



Key points:

- Project-based interventions are person-driven - chosen by the person and carried out by that person to the fullest extent possible
- Project-based interventions help people to renegotiate identity and (re)develop self-concept and self-worth
- The end product of project-based interventions is designed to help others, this is tied to self-worth and quality of life
- PEP Talks provide resources for the people by the people with aphasia and related disorders
- Melissa leaves us with this quote, which could be a core value of LPAA interventions: “In the absence of meaningful engagement in chosen life activity, all interventions will ultimately fail.” Mark Ylvisaker

Follow this link to view PEP Talks videos: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTKNqcOLz021t97glyRPHAQ>