Key learning points from City Access Online Assessment Training

Preparing and starting sessions

- Feeling prepared is important to successful online sessions. Experience using your available videoconferencing platform can help you feel more confident.

- Setting up your service user to use your videoconferencing platform enables your sessions to take place. It gives an opportunity for your service user to practise and feel prepared.

- Keep meeting invites clear and concise, using a one click link for simple access to your session.

- Setting an agenda for the meeting can help set expectations and plans for regular breaks to help with managing fatigue.

- Building rapport and therapeutic relationships online is feasible and can improve the experience of your session for you and your service user.

- Reasonable adjustments for rapport building online are simple to make, including spending a bit more time getting to know the service user, organising an in-person visit first, go at a slower pace, regularly check in during the session and be responsive to what you see (you may need to prompt the service user to be in your camera view).

Carrying out sessions

- Videoconferencing features can be used as tools to facilitate online assessment. They can enable you to deliver the assessment as intended and replicate in-person delivery.

- Some platforms have limited features and this needs to be a consideration when you are planning your assessment session.

- Check to see if the assessment you want to use is adjusted for online delivery, including the scoring sheet.

- Practise how the service user with aphasia will respond to assessment items, and how you will check that you've understood their responses.

- Establish reliable methods for the person to share their response, for example providing cards, use of gesture, numbering options and using yes/no (verbal or non-verbal).

- Sometimes things can go wrong, and it is out of your control. However, there are lots of situations where the issue can be resolved.

- Being familiar with your videoconferencing platform can help you guide the service user if issues occur.

- If a problem occurs, take a breath and problem solve what might be happening.

- Communication is key so reaching out to your service user or helper, by phone or text, is important. Acknowledging the frustrations with technology and providing reassurance is a good first step. If you resolve the problem, but do not finish the assessment, that's great. You can both leave the session satisfied you worked it out, hopefully ready to try again.

Supporting communication online

- Confidence in using technology can be low for people with aphasia post stroke. Encouragement and support can help but always check in with how motivated the service user is to try.

- Helpers may be supportive in online sessions. They can be family members, carers, friends, assistants, volunteers. Some helpers will need training to be able to support your service user.

- It is possible to help someone get online who lives alone. These include spending more time practising, establish if a helper is needed/available, send instructions for joining call or have a phone call to talk through the steps.

- Service users with severe expressive aphasia can use multimodal responses during online sessions. Use of a camera is key to access.

- Using powered/high tech AAC is not a barrier to doing online sessions.