

Hello ISAAC Canada members,

I am happy to be writing again to share a few things with you, not the least of which is a reminder of the ISAAC Cancún Conference coming up in July (see <https://isaac-online.org/english/conference-cancun/> for more details!). The early bird registration has been extended to June 9 so there is still time to register at reduced rates. It promises to be a great conference with people involved in supporting and using AAC coming together to share and learn from across the globe. There will be a few Canadian presenters as well so that is certainly exciting.

If you are presenting at the Cancun Conference please share so that we can promote and celebrate all the Canadian presenters!

Also during the conference we will be having our ISAAC Canada General Meeting. It will be held in Cancun so anyone who is an ISAAC Canada member and who is joining us in Cancun can join us in person. But we will also be extending a virtual invitation to membership who are not able to be at the Cancun Conference. Stay tuned! More information on that front to follow!

Now in addition to the reminder of the Conference I have a few additional things I would like to share.

The Executive has voted in favour of a New Terms of Reference. The next step is for our National Council to vote in favour and then, if passed, the New Terms of Reference will be ratified at the Annual Meeting in Cancun. All of you will get a chance to participate in that ratification vote at the General Meeting in July.

One of the changes that has been proposed is the re-engagement of ISAAC Canada with the Breaking the ICE Conference(s). Since 2001, Breaking the ICE (BTI) Canada has hosted consumer focused events for people who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). The goal is to provide individuals who use AAC opportunities to come together and learn from each other, create meaningful relationships in the community, and have a platform to share ideas and feelings.

ICE stands for Independence, Community and Empowerment. The name "Breaking the ICE" was introduced by one of our ICE Committee members, who is also an AAC user. We were searching for a more meaningful name to reflect the goal of the conferences. It represents how BTI events encourage participants to meet other people who use AAC and 'break the ice' to form new friendships.

Breaking the ICE conferences have been held across Canada (ICE West, ICE Alberta, and Breaking the ICE in Ontario) every two years prior to the pandemic. Since then, the committee has shifted to hosting more frequent virtual conferences, which has allowed more opportunities for AAC users from across Canada to participate. If you are interested in learning more I would encourage you to email conf.breakingtheice@gmail.com and stay tuned as the partnership between Breaking the ICE and ISAAC Canada grows.

I would also like to share an opportunity for adults who use AAC to participate in a research study "Reflections of Aided Communicators: How I Got Here!". The research team is seeking participants that are over the age of 18, have limited verbal speech, use aided communication (electronic or non-electronic AAC) in their daily lives, have congenital disabilities (disabilities present from birth or early childhood) and live in Canada. The aim of the study is to increase understanding of supportive strategies that help enhance independence for individuals that use AAC. If you are interested in learning more and/or participating in this research please contact me (Dr. Kathy Howery) at khowery@ualberta.ca.

Finally a thank you to Tracy Shepherd for the excellent webinar on the Family Impact of Assistive Technology – AAC outcome tool. It was well attended and Tracy provided not only excellent information but also a chance for participants to look at Case Studies involving use of the FIAT – AAC. The webinar was recorded and will be archived on the ISAAC website <https://isaac-online.org/english/webinars/>

If you have an idea for a webinar, have something you would like to share with ISAAC Canada membership (and beyond) or feel there is someone we should be reaching out to ask to share, please contact myself at khowery@ualberta.ca or Jocelyn Roberts at Jocelyn.Roberts@albertahealthservices.ca .

That is it from me for now. As I say stay tuned for more information on our new Terms of Reference and opportunities for you to get involved in some new committees that we hope will be an outgrowth of that work. And I hope to see many of you in Cancun!

Best regards,



Kathy Howery, PhD.
President
ISAAC Canada