

SPELLERS AND ALLIES ADVOCACY NETWORK

ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SPELLING AS  
COMMUNICATION



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## Welcome to the Spellers and Allies Advocacy Network (Spellers & Allies)

We are thrilled to have you on board and are excited for you to help promote and advocate for the work we do. Young advocates are an integral part of our network and we hope that you find this experience enriching, informative and positive. We strive to advance the I-ASC mission of communication access for all nonspeaking, minimally and unreliably speaking people (when we say nonspeaking people, we are referring to all of these categories).

## Our Mission as I-ASC

The mission of I-ASC is to advance communication access for non-speaking individuals globally through training, education, advocacy and research.

I-ASC supports all forms of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) with a focus on methods of spelling and typing. I-ASC currently offers practitioner training in Spelling to Communicate (S2C) with the hope that other methods of AAC using spelling or typing will join our association.

## Purpose of I-ASC's Spellers and Allies Advocacy Network

The I-ASC Spellers & Allies Advocacy Network is a group of spellers and allies who advocate together around issues that concern nonspeaking people, such as agency, autonomy, and access. Through public education and advocacy campaigns, we seek to make real change for all nonspeaking people.

The Spellers & Allies Advocacy Network welcomes nonspeaking, minimally speaking and unreliably speaking adults above the age of 18. We welcome allies and anyone interested in becoming an ally between the ages of 18-30.

## Spellers and Allies Advocacy Network Culture Code

It is important that our network is a positive and empowering space. Please read our culture code and ensure you are willing to follow these guidelines before joining us.

**CULTURE CODE**

The purpose of our code is to create a leadership alliance between spellers and allies that follows principles of solidarity.  
Nothing about us without us.

**RESPECT AND KINDNESS**

Presuming competence in each other allows us to create a safe space, free of judgement, where all opinions are welcome.

As a team we put our relationships first and support all levels of regulation.

**TRUSTFUL COMMUNICATION**

We strive to develop a network of fellowship and trust by being thoughtful and intentional in all our communication while assuming good faith in others.

**RISKS AND COURAGE**

We encourage a departure from each of our comfort zones in order to further our cause and promise to support each other in conquering our fears together.

**EMPOWERMENT & PURPOSE**

Empowering one another to become a community of leaders who represent our shared purpose and work to achieve our collective goals.

We are more together. Toward our goal,  
we take the best of each other.

## How the Network Works

Since group members are located all across the world, our best way to communicate is via online meetings. We typically meet twice a month, depending on the need and on-going advocacy project.

### We want to know you!

We request that you [fill in this google form](#) in order for us to have contact details and to fully register you in the network.

### When do we meet?

We take regular surveys of members availability and plan times that accommodate as many members as possible. If you are not able to attend live, we welcome members to watch our meeting recordings and participate through email. Find out our next meeting time by emailing: [spellers-allies@i-asc.org](mailto:spellers-allies@i-asc.org) or by checking I-ASC's social media page.

### Communicating in the Network

For ease of collaboration, Spellers & Allies uses google drive (including google documents and google forms). In the case of you not having a Gmail account, we do request that you set one up for ease of collaboration and group projects.

### Getting acquainted with Zoom

Zoom is a video conferencing platform that we use to have our meetings. Prior to our meetings, you will receive a zoom link in the meeting agenda. Simply click on the link to get into the meeting.

Note: If it is your first time at the meeting, please join five minutes early to get it set up.

### Contact person at I-ASC

We have group members checking our email: [spellers-allies@i-asc.org](mailto:spellers-allies@i-asc.org) regularly. Please email any questions or feedback you have for us here.

Monica van Schaik is our wonderful Leadership Cadre member of the Spellers & Allies Advocacy Network. She holds the group together and leads communication among the network. You are welcome to contact her here: [monica@i-asc.org](mailto:monica@i-asc.org)

## Guidelines to Getting Involved

Members of Spellers & Allies are always working in groups on various advocacy projects. Some projects that you may be able to get involved in are online campaigns such as videos and memes, planning workshops and presentations, planning and hosting events, as well as letter writing and petition campaigns. There is no shortage of ways to get involved and advocate with Spellers & Allies. Here are a few ideas on how you can involve yourself:

Promote us on Social Media - Using tools such as our website, I-ASC specific hashtags and memes, you can educate your friends and followers on what we stand for, what we do and how Spelling to Communicate works. The frequency of the posts is up to you.

Host an Event - Whether it's screening a video/movie or just talking about neurodiversity, we encourage you to spread awareness and educate as many people as possible! Your school/college, your favorite coffee shop or even your office/workspace are great places to start. We have many materials and resources to support you in hosting an event. Come to our next meeting and let us know that you are interested in this.

Fundraise - Online campaigns, social gatherings or running a marathon are a few ways you can help fundraise for our cause. By contributing and/or raising funds for I-ASC, you help us get one step closer to creating equitable opportunities for the nonspeaking community.

These are some examples. We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas at our next meeting. You can also learn more about our past projects by [clicking here](#)

## FAQ's

### What does I-ASC do?

We are an association composed of individuals from the nonspeaking and neurodivergent communities; their families; trained practitioners; and informed allies. I-ASC is committed to ensuring access to effective communication that supports agency and autonomy for nonspeaking, minimally and unreliably speaking individuals. We serve by educating, training, supporting research and advocating. Learn more by reading our [website](#).

### What is an ally?

Any person who doesn't identify as non-speaking, unreliably speaking or minimally speaking and who is interested in listening and advocating with nonspeaking people. We are looking for more allies and encourage you to join! [Read this interesting blog post](#) written by our members on how to be a good ally.

### What if I have never interacted with someone from the nonspeaking community?

That is absolutely fine. We encourage you to join so you can learn more.

### I am a nonspeaking advocate but not fluent on the letterboards yet. Can I join?

Yes, listening is still a way to participate. We will try and make our meetings as inclusive as possible. Please get in touch with Monica about how to make the meetings accessible for you ([monica@i-asc.org](mailto:monica@i-asc.org)).

### Who can join the Spellers & Allies Advocacy Network?

The Spellers & Allies Advocacy Network welcomes anyone who identifies as nonspeaking, minimally speaking or unreliably speaking above the age of 18. We welcome allies and anyone interested in becoming an ally between the ages of 18-30.

### Can my CRP and/or parent attend the meeting with me?

Of course, your CRP is welcome to attend meetings with you! CRPs who are between the ages of 18-30 and interested in being an ally are also welcome to join Spellers & Allies. Spellers & Allies tries to create a space for adult spellers and allies to work together. For this reason, CRPs

who are not in this age range can attend meetings to support the participation of spellers but not to participate as members themselves.

**I'm an ally above the age of 30. Can I still participate if I'm not in the age range of 18- 30?**

Our focus for this group is allies between the ages of 18 to 30. If you do not fall within this age range and would like to look at other ways to be involved, please join I-ASC and indicate on our form that you are interested in advocacy or email Anna directly: [anna@i-asc.org](mailto:anna@i-asc.org).

**What if I don't live in the USA?**

Yes, you can most definitely join S&A. We already have a global community and try to accommodate as many people as possible.

**I want to join the Spellers and Allies Advocacy Network, but I can't attend the meetings, can I still join?**

We want as many people as possible to be involved in Spellers & Allies. Please email Monica with the times that you can meet, and she will see if there is a working group you can participate in that has a flexible schedule. You are also welcome to participate by watching our meeting recordings and offering your thoughts through email.