A Needs Assessor's Approach to Assistive Technology

[00:00:01] **Robin:** ,A Needs Assessor's approach to assistive technology. A needs assessor has a significantly different relationship with assistive technology than that of an assistive technology trainer. An effective assistive technology trainer has an expansive knowledge of the functionality of a wide range of assistive technologies

and is able to guide the disabled person through an exploration of the practical application of the strategies recommended during the needs assessment, while also exploring any additional strategies that appear relevant to the disabled person's activities and working environment. By contrast, for a needs assessor assistive technologies are only relevant at all by consequence of the process of gathering information pertaining to the symptoms, disabilities, and activities of the disabled person undertaking the needs assessment.

Although it is infrequent, it is relatively common for a needs assessor to produce a needs assessment report that does not contain any recommendations for assistive technologies at all. For example, some disabled people prefer to access available human support provisions rather than attempt to adopt and apply assistive technologies to their work, particularly when the person is under pressure of time and would struggle to engage with the process of training.

In this context, it is most important for a needs assessor to develop a comprehensive awareness and understanding of beneficial impacts of various assistive technologies within the context of different disabilities, core symptoms, difficulties, and activities. This is more important in practice than the needs, assessors, knowledge of how the tools actually work.

When a needs assessor is working in a different context, such as for an organization that is not operating within the framework of a support provision that is funded by government. The job specification and workload of the needs assessor are likely to be significantly different. The support provision may almost exclusively involve free open source,

and low cost assistive technologies provided to disabled people across a wide range of backgrounds and life circumstances. Furthermore, a practitioner's role within the organization may involve a combination of both assessment and technology training with the practitioners supporting the disabled person all the way from points of engagement with the organization,

through to the conclusion of a training process that has enabled the person in the use of assistive technologies. Compared to the relatively narrow focus of the roles of needs, assessor and assistive technology trainer in the United Kingdom, a needs assessor working in this context would need to develop a more rounded knowledge of assistive technologies alongside concurrent development of skills in needs

assessment. The exact balance between the two would be determined by the organization for whom the needs assessor is working and the function of their needs assessor's role within that organization. As is often the case in life, necessity is the mother of invention. Using the information provided in this course, an organization seeking to connect to their service uses with assistive technologies

we'll be able to develop a service that is tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of those service users, as well as to the objectives of the organization and the restrictions and limitations within which it operates.