Employing a ‘just normal’ approach enables an insight into what individuals require of assistive technologies in order for them to live in ways they perceive are generally fair, right, sufficient, and fundamentally ‘good enough’. This user-centric approach has implications for appropriate design and provision of assistive technologies, and for advancing assistive technology outcome research agendas.

**Background:**

**being ‘just normal’**

‘Just normal’ is a new means for understanding the concerns and motivations of users of assistive technologies, and has implications for service provision, policy, and empowering end users.

This is a concept and theory originally developed through research with users of prostheses, which determined that individuals are motivated to live in ways that they perceive are right, reasonable, fair, sufficient, and generally ‘good enough’ for them, as they see it. Persons are therefore said to seek and use assistive technologies in ways that help them to live ‘just normally’ (see [1] for further detail).

This approach contrasts with common rehabilitation parlance promoting “optimal” or “maximal” functioning with assistive technologies [2]. Instead, the focus is on determining and supplying solutions to enable individuals to do and be what they consider they should be able to do and be, and to the extent they see fit.

**Fig 1. Concepts associated with being ‘just normal’.**

**Implications for products, provision, personnel, and policy**

During the GATE Research Group consensus meeting, there was agreement about general principles that are most important for all research initiatives in the field of assistive technology, one of which is the need for user involvement in all aspects of research, as well as in policy development, system design and service provision [3].

A ‘just normal’ approach addresses this:

- Rather than focusing on what is technologically possible with assistive technologies, the emphasis in a ‘just normal’ approach is in determining what an individual considers they ‘ought’ to be able to do or be like as they go about their daily lives. This ensures a more user-centric approach to product development, and also a means of determining valued and relevant assistive technology outcomes.

Professionals employing a ‘just normal’ approach are able to gain a richer understanding of the needs of the individuals they work with, including what users need from assistive technologies and how they use them in their daily lives. This has implications for the prescription of assistive technologies and ongoing support.

**Impact for AT users and other stakeholders**

In consultations taking this approach, professionals can elicit, and individuals are empowered to share, what they as users consider is necessary in order for them to be ‘just normal’.

This invites the individual to play a greater part in shared decision-making processes involved in their healthcare, and professionals can work with these contributions to ensure individuals are provided solutions and support that helps them to live in ways important to them, reducing the likelihood of undesirable outcomes such as device abandonment.

**Signatories to the CRPD may utilise the framework to better understand what persons within their countries need from assistive technologies. This has implications for the provision of assistive technologies as they support the implementation of articles of the convention e.g., on rehabilitation and participation (Articles 26 & 29).**

**Implications for other aspects of the Global Research Agenda**

**GRA 2.5: How can the role of the end-user be facilitated and maximized in the service provision process?**

A ‘just normal’ approach ensures service provision closely addresses the needs of the end user. It has implications for more relevant product design and supply, as well as enriching the consultation experience.

**GRA 5.2: How can the individual needs of people with impairments/disability be assessed and connected to the most appropriate assistive technology solutions?**

Professionals are afforded a framework which helps to draw out what an individual needs to live in ways they see as necessary to them (what it means for them to be ‘just normal’). The most appropriate support and solutions can then be selected to meet these needs.

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This research is part of a project exploring how persons in Fiji live ‘just normally’ with assistive technologies.