
C6: Custom moulded seating for when you need to intimately match body contours for seating

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Learning objectives:

1. To understand the benefits of custom moulded seating for persons with postural management needs
2. To discuss when custom moulded seating should be considered as a feasible seating solution
3. To illustrate the process of shape capturing for custom moulded seating

Session description:

Custom moulded seating has often been perceived amongst many clinicians as being a last resort seating option, and only used with those individuals with very limited independent mobility or with significant postural and skeletal asymmetries (Sparacio 2017). However, with an increased understanding of posture and pressure management the use of custom moulded seating continues to increase and be recognized as an optimum seating solution for many users. With custom moulded seating intimately following the curves and contours of the user it can become a vital tool in the overall postural and health management of the user with complex physical disabilities. When moulded correctly it can be used to support physiological, psychological and functional participation.

Progressively more clinicians recognize how the body is a dynamic system, vulnerable to distortion as a result of poor positioning, an inability to transition and subject to gravity; yet it is also inclined to respond to realignment when given correct directional forces (Hill and Goldsmith 2010). This in turn can lead to increased balance and stability in sitting, improved physiological responses, some counter correction to destructive postural forces (Hetzl and Hetzel 2017), and increased functional participation of the user. Subsequently it is vital that custom moulded seating is

considered earlier for our users as preventative of further postural destructive asymmetry.

In this presentation we will explore the myths around why custom moulded seating is often not considered as a feasible early solution, and what potential benefits it can offer as a prescribed seating solution. Additionally, we will briefly explore the process of shape capturing and a range of custom moulded seating options available, illustrating the latter through case stories.

Content references:

1. Hetzel TR and Hetzel MC. 2017. Early vs late intervention with custom molded seating. 34th International Seating Symposium, Nashville, USA.
2. Hill S and Goldsmith J. 2010. Biomechanics and prevention of body shape distortion. Tizard Learning Disability Review, 15, 15-30.
3. Sparacio JM. Custom molded seating: back to basics. 34th International Seating Symposium, Nashville, USA.