

**HEADS UP!**  
*KATHRYN FISHER, B.SC.(OT)*  
**Invacare Canada**

Positioning of the head can provide challenges to clinicians developing seating and mobility solutions. As the head represents each individual's personality it's position influences social interaction. It is vital that we attempt to position each client's head not only for postural alignment and organ function but also for optimal social and environmental interaction.

In order to successfully position the head a comprehensive seating assessment must be performed. It is imperative that the positioning of the pelvis, lower extremities and trunk be addressed before attempting to position the head. Once stability and support have been provided then it can be determined where to apply forces to position the head. Often the challenge in head positioning is supporting "safe zones". The best means of determining support is by feeling the forces required for correction. Using your hands to position the head allows us to determine the direction of force as well as the amount of force required. Selection of specific head support components can then be determined. Issues of client comfort, consistent client positioning, skin breakdown, client self image and caregiver education and understanding are among the considerations in equipment selection. Goals for head positioning must be realistic.

This session will utilize case studies and hands-on equipment selection and adjustment to illustrate common head positioning issues and develop strategies for successful solutions

**Learning Objectives**

1. Participants will outline basic principles of seating and positioning.
2. Participants will identify assessment techniques related to head positioning.
3. Participants will develop strategies to create head positioning systems for clients with complex needs.

**Speaker Bio**

With a background in Occupational Therapy Kathy has worked as an Assistive Technology Supplier and clinical educator and is now Clinical Business Development Manager at Invacare Canada. Kathy has been involved in the provision of high technology rehabilitation equipment with clients in a variety of diagnostic categories including paediatrics. Kathy has presented internationally at a variety of conferences including the Canadian Seating and Mobility Conference, Healthcare Innovations, RESNA, Medtrade, International Seating Symposium and European Seating Symposium.