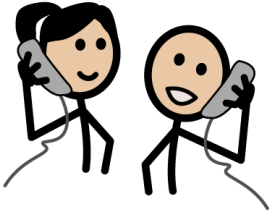
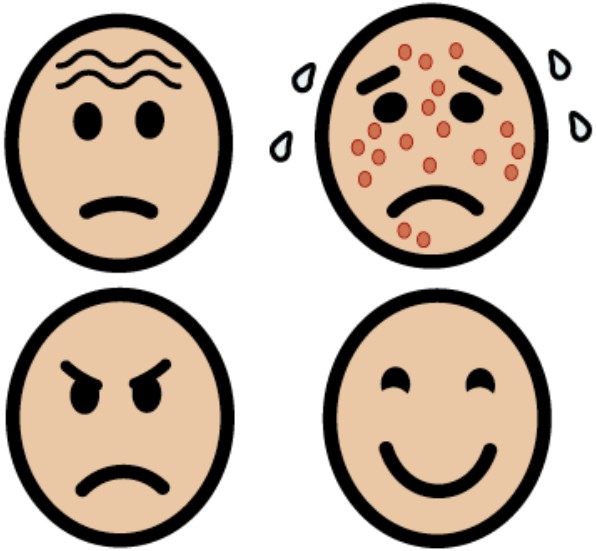


Communication

We have the equal right to communicate,
and to be understood.



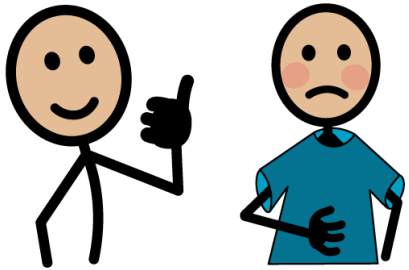
Do you need help to share your thoughts and feelings?

Do you need help to share your thoughts and feelings?

Even when we don't use words, we communicate our thoughts and feelings by using our tone of voice, eyes, facial expressions, or body. We use our behaviour to express thoughts and feelings too. For example, we might move towards or try to get things we like, and try to get away from or push away things we don't like. Sometimes when the people around us don't understand what we are trying to say, our attempts to communicate can be called challenging behaviour.

Do the people in your life need support to recognise and capture how you communicate:

- ☐ your likes and dislikes?
- ☐ your feelings?
- ☐ who you like and don't like spending time with?
- ☐ when you are feeling happy and safe?
- ☐ when you want something?
- ☐ when you are feeling bad?
- ☐ when you are in pain, or sick?
- ☐ when something is wrong?



What else do the people around you need help with to understand how you communicate your thoughts and feelings?

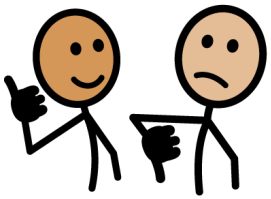
Write your ideas in your planning manual.

Do you need help to be able to say no, refuse and reject choices?

Do you need help to be able to say no, refuse and reject choices?

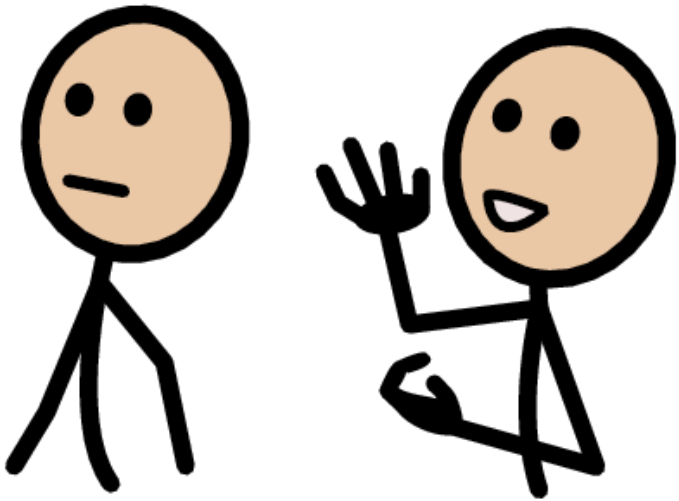
Being able to say ‘no’, and to have that respected, is essential to your quality of life. Sometimes you might need to try new things to see if you like them, but it is important that you can say ‘no’ at any time and that your supporters respect your choice. It’s ok to change your mind about any part of your plan at any time, and to say ‘no’.
Do you need any of these things to support you to say ‘no’?

- ☐ support for the people in your life to understand that it is your right to say ‘no’, even when that might be inconvenient for them?
- ☐ opportunities for your supporters to understand how to give you real choices?
- ☐ help for your supporters to learn how you say ‘no’ or reject a choice?
- ☐ the chance to learn to develop the way you say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to be more understandable – for example by learning to shake or nod your head, use a key word sign, use eye gaze (e.g. up for ‘yes’, down for ‘no’), or to use switches or a communication board to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’?



Are there any other ways in which you could be supported to say ‘no’, refuse and reject choices?

Write them in your planning manual.

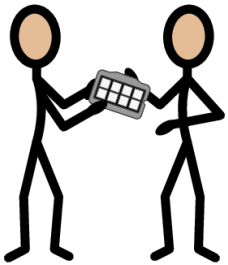


Do you have a way to ask for, and get, attention and interaction from others?

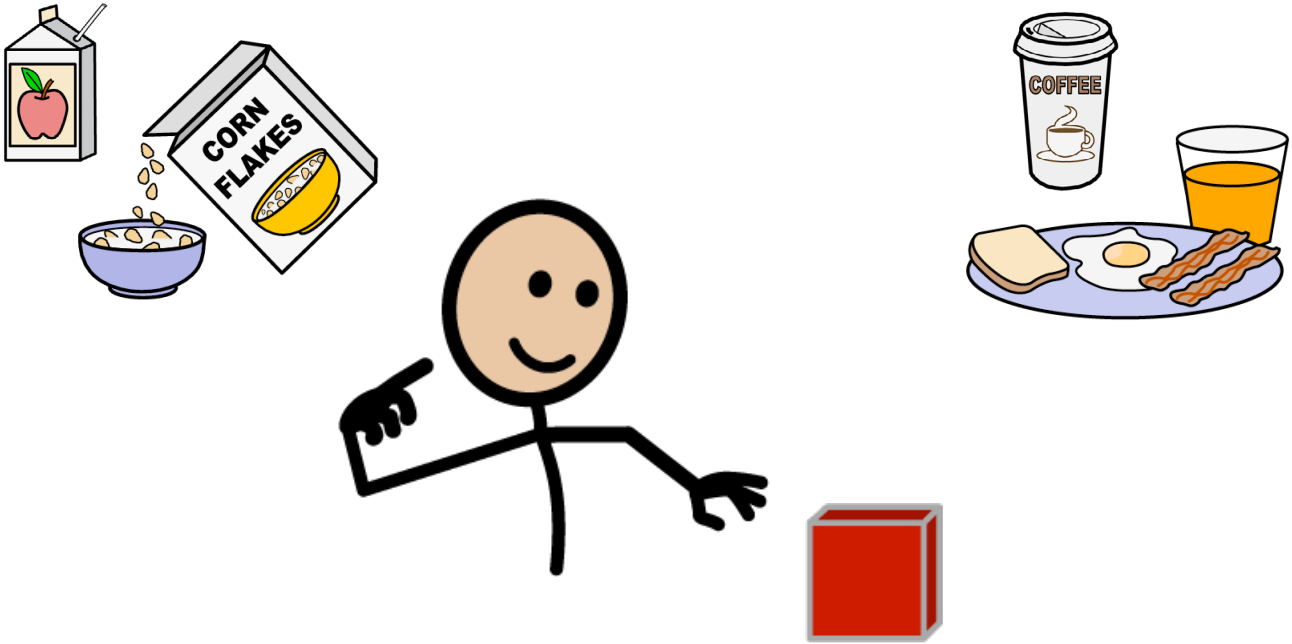
Do you have a way to ask for, and get, attention and interaction from others?

If you don't or can't use speech, other people sometimes think you don't need to interact much or have conversations. That's not true. We all need to know that we matter, what's going on, and to feel connected. Sometimes the only way we can get people to talk with us is by doing something which might be called 'challenging behaviour'.
Do the people in your life need support to:

- ☐ understand your needs for attention and interaction?
- ☐ understand the ways you ask for attention and interaction?
- ☐ learn how to give you the attention and interaction that you need?
- ☐ help you to get the attention you need from other people successfully?
- ☐ learn how to speak with you, not about you in front of you?
- ☐ support you to strengthen relationships and spend more time with the people you like?
- ☐ support you to build new relationships?



What other kinds of help do the people in your life need?
Write your ideas in your planning manual.



Do you need help to be able to ask for what you want?

Do you need help to be able to ask for what you want?

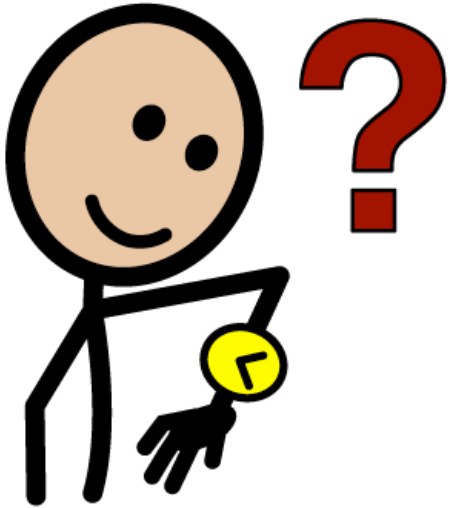
The things you want in your daily life should be easily accessible to you, so that you don't need to ask every time you want something. If you don't use speech, there are many ways you can ask for the things you want which you can't get yourself. It is important that your supporters know to always respond to your requests, even if the answer needs to be 'no' or 'I don't know'. You should not be discouraged from asking for what you want, when you want it. Do you need to find more ways to ask for what you want, and learn to use them, such as:

- ☐ symbols?
- ☐ pictures?
- ☐ photos?
- ☐ gestures and pointing?
- ☐ signing, e.g. key word signing or Auslan?
- ☐ taking or directing another person to what you want?
- ☐ auditory scanning*?
- ☐ objects?
- ☐ technology?

What other ways might you be able to ask for what you want?

Write your ideas in your planning manual.

* see your planning manual for an explanation of auditory scanning

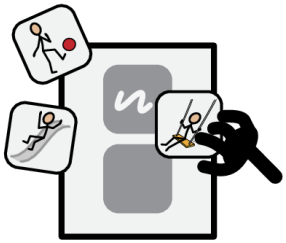


Do you have a way to ask about and know your calendar and routines?

Do you have a way to ask about and know your calendar and routines?

People can feel anxious if they don't know what is going to happen next in their life, what is expected of them, or when things are going to happen. When things are not predictable, or feel out of our control, we can feel stressed. Sometimes expression of this anxiety and stress can be called 'challenging behaviour'.

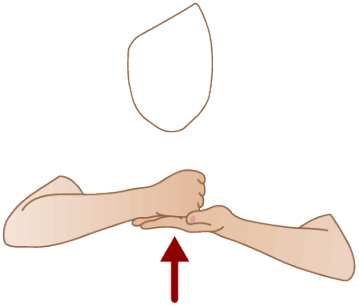
Do you and your supporters need help to develop routines which:

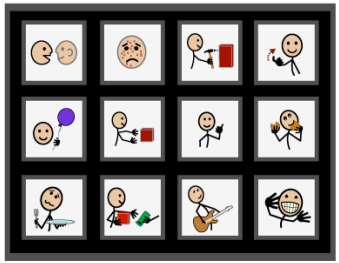


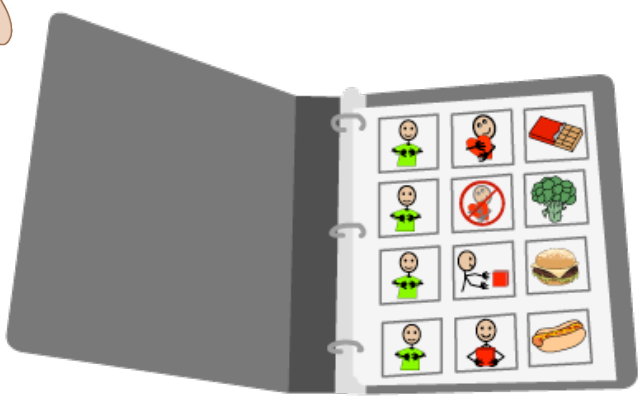
- ☐ are based on what is important to, and for, you?
- ☐ help you know what's happening now and in the future?
- ☐ suit your needs and wishes?
- ☐ you have input to?
- ☐ respect the ways you like things to be done?
- ☐ are recorded in ways you understand?
- ☐ you can access using visual, auditory, sensory or tangible supports?
- ☐ you can learn to access on technology, eg an iPad or smart phone?

What would it take for you to to be able to ask about and know your calendar and routines?

Write your ideas in your planning manual.







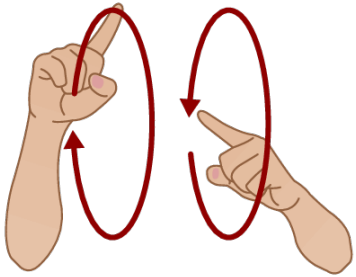
Can you express <u>everything</u> you need or want to say?

Can you express <u>everything</u> you need or want to say?

It can be frustrating if you don't have access to enough words to express yourself. You might be behaving in ways which seem challenging to others in order to get your message across. You have the right to aids to support your communication and reduce your frustraton. There are more choces than ever when it comes to finding a communication system which suits you.
Do you or your supporters need help to:

- ☐ find the right communication system which you can use to have two way conversations with other people (for example a communication book, a communication app on an ipad, sign language, or Braille)?
- ☐ find the best way to access your system, such as pointing, eye gaze, a switch, a head pointer or a keyguard?
- ☐ customise your communication system to reflect what you want to say?
- ☐ help you learn to use a communication system even when you sometimes appear to not want or be able to pay attention?
- ☐ get help from local organisations to find the best strategies for you?
- ☐ help you to improve your communication and literacy skills over time?

What else might you need so that you can say everything you want to say?
Write your ideas in your planning manual.



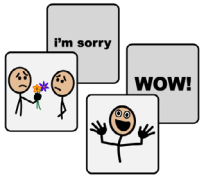
Do you and the people around you need support to learn how to use your communication system?

Do you and the people around you need support to learn how to use your communication system?

Learning to use a communication system is like learning a new language - it takes a lot of time. You will need plenty of opportunities across your day to see your new communication system being used for real interaction. It is important that the people around you are being supported to learn your communication system so they can model how it is used. Communication systems are often called Augmentative and Alternative Communication, or AAC.

Do you or the people around you need support to:

- ☐ find a suitably qualified and experienced AAC professional to support you?
- ☐ understand that you might need to see others using your system for quite a long time before you are able to use it yourself?
- ☐ understand that your system must be accessible to you at all times and how to make this possible?
- ☐ learn how to use the system and to model its use for real social interaction?
- ☐ get help from local organisations to find the best strategies for you?
- ☐ attend a conference on communication to learn what's possible, and what works?
- ☐ find other AAC users to share experiences and support each other?



What else might you need to learn how to use your communication system?

Write your ideas in your planning manual.