

Support my  
communication  
and  
decision making  
**Workbook**





This workbook accompanies the 'My Communication and My Decisions' webinar found at [www.waindividualisedservices.org.au](http://www.waindividualisedservices.org.au)

Make sure you save your work by downloading and saving this workbook to your own device before you digitally record your notes. You can also print and write your notes directly in this workbook.

Self determination  
and  
communication  
are fundamental  
human rights.

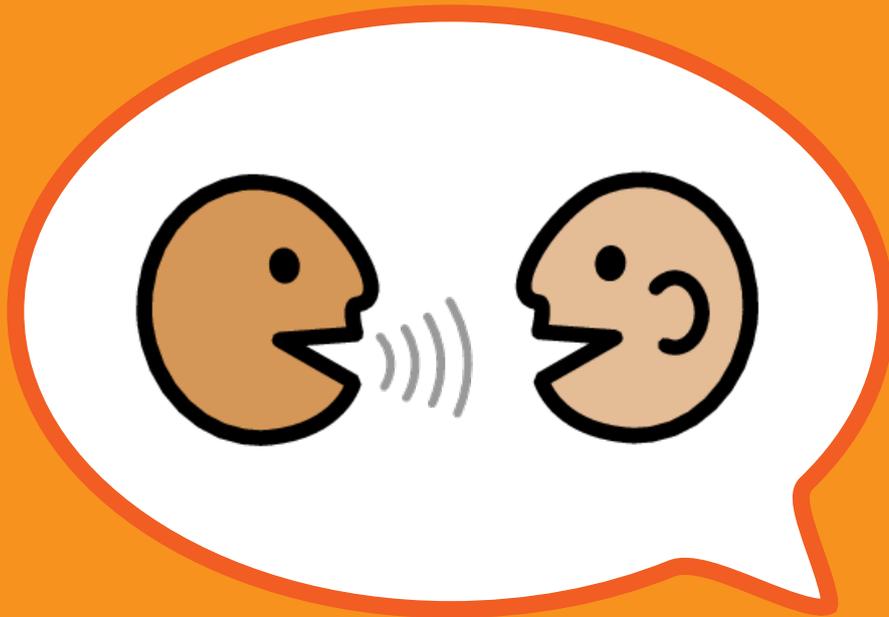






# Part 1

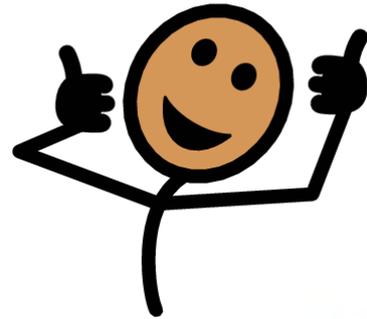
Support my communication



# Assume I communicate

Observe my actions and reactions:

- A look
- A smile
- Turning my head towards you
- Moving in a certain direction
- Staying engaged with something I'm doing
- Staying near you





Assume I can



**How do I show my understanding?**

**What are some ways I communicate?**





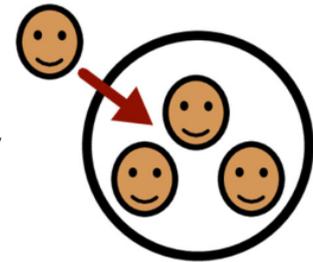
# Include me in the conversation

- Talk to me, not about me, when I am present.
- **Start sentences with “you”** (avoid “he” or “she”).
- If you are sharing information about me, talk to me directly

*“You went to the pool yesterday, didn’t you?”*

*“You looked like you had fun last night.”*

*“You seemed to enjoy that walk this morning. You were smiling a lot.”*

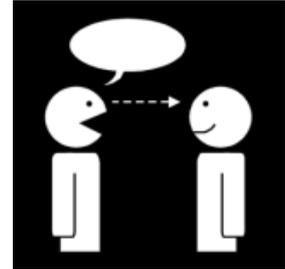




- Watch and observe what I'm doing
- Then:
  - Tell me what you notice
  - Tell me what you think it could mean

*"I see you are standing by the fridge. Are you hungry?"*

*"You are looking at the door. Would you like to go out?"*



**By doing this:**



**You give me feedback on my communication**

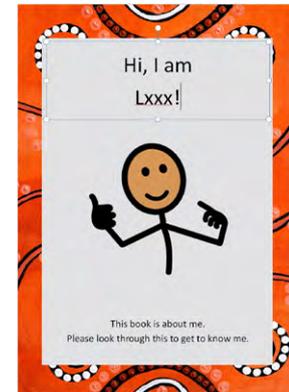
**You help me understand your actions**





# Learn about me and how I communicate

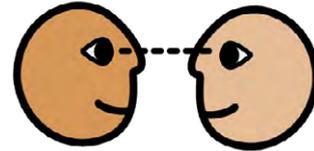
- “All About Me” Books or communication passports
- Visual displays
- Visual schedules
- Remnant books are the visual and tactile way of recording important events in people’s lives, using photos and actual objects like a ticket, or menu.
- Involve me in the creation of these documents
- Gather information from a wide range of people
- Make them interesting and update them regularly
- Keep them accessible, so I can share them (not in a drawer).





# Help me focus my attention

- Joint attention is a communication essential
- Watch me:
  - Am I relaxed and ready to attend?
  - Follow my lead: what am I looking at, what do I appear to be focused on?
  - Be in the moment with me: join in with me rather than making me join you.
  - Reply to the sounds I am making, to create a dialogue.

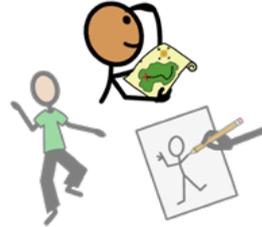




# Give me plenty of experiences and things to do

This is how I can:

- Explore what's possible for me
- Build my interest in things
- Learn about new things
- Have experiences to chat about

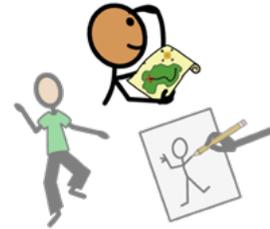


 **By doing this, you help me expand my communication and decision making.**





Give me plenty of experiences  
and things to do



**What are some of the things I enjoy?**

**Based on that, what other experiences can  
you offer me?**

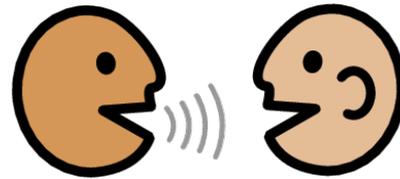




# Plan for different reasons to communicate

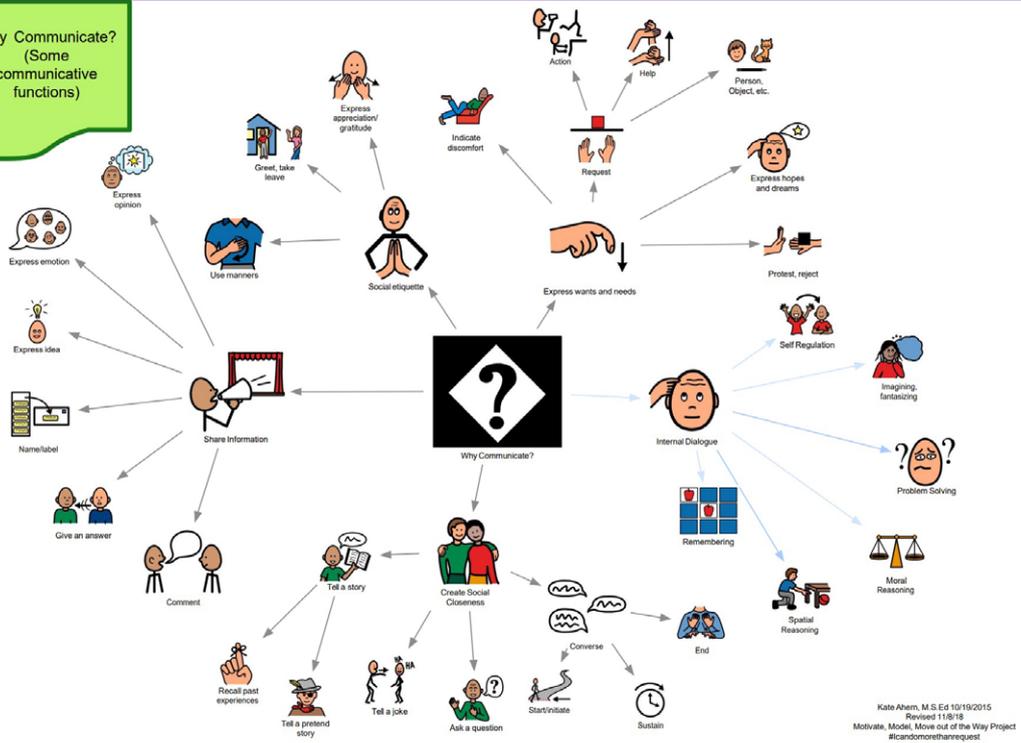
We communicate for many reasons:

- Make comments
- Ask questions
- Communicate needs and wants
- Greet
- Make requests





Why Communicate?  
(Some communicative functions)



Kate Ahem, M.S.Ed 10/19/2015  
 Revised 11/8/18  
 Motivate, Model, Move out of the Way Project  
 #icandomorethanrequest



# Plan for different reasons to communicate



**What are the reasons you communicate with your peers?**

**Compare them to the reasons you communicate with me.**





# Use signs, gestures or symbols as well as words

- Gestures, signs and visuals add to my understanding  
*eg When you say “I like”, do the sign for ‘like’ or use a visual symbol for ‘like’*
- Eye-contact
- One gesture, sign or symbol at a time
- Be consistent.





# Use real objects to support my understanding

- Use objects, pictures and things I can see, hold and hear as conversation supports (e.g. photos, games, things I like to hold or look at).
- Visual and concrete information helps me understand your message and focus my attention.





# Support my communication



**What communication supports do you use with me?**

**What else could you try?**





## Tips on how to use visuals

- Say the word I might be saying
- If I am looking at an object, point to a picture of that object and name it  
*“Coffee.*  
[Point to coffee card]  
*Do you want a coffee?”*
- Use visuals with other people, not just me  
eg If we are in a café, use the card and point to it when ordering coffee at the counter.
- If unsure of my response, say so.  
*“I think it is a yes. I am not sure.”*

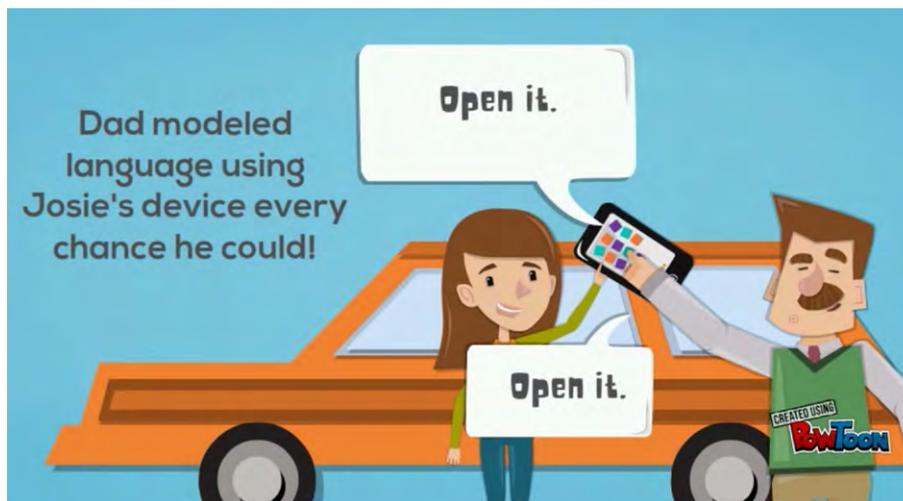


**By doing this, you are showing me how to use visuals to communicate.  
Modelling is super important.**





## The importance of modelling





# Show me what I do well

Show me photos or videos of myself doing things I like or having meaningful interactions with others.



**Seeing myself doing things that matter to me makes me more likely to try them again.**





## Help me think beyond the 'here and now'.

- Create a remnant book or show me photos to help me remember things or people.
- Instead of a whole book, show me a visual display or placemat with one or two photos. Have a few different placemats and change them regularly to create interest.

Pool fun!



Sometimes, I go to the pool.  
I do many laps.  
Last time, Joan and Luke came with me.

Joan and I smile.  
We are having fun!



# Give me time to respond

- I need time to process and prepare my responses
- Count to 10 in your head before expecting an answer



**By doing this, you give me a chance to show you what I want.**





# Keep it simple

- Keep your language simple:
  - One phrase at a time
  - One idea per sentence.

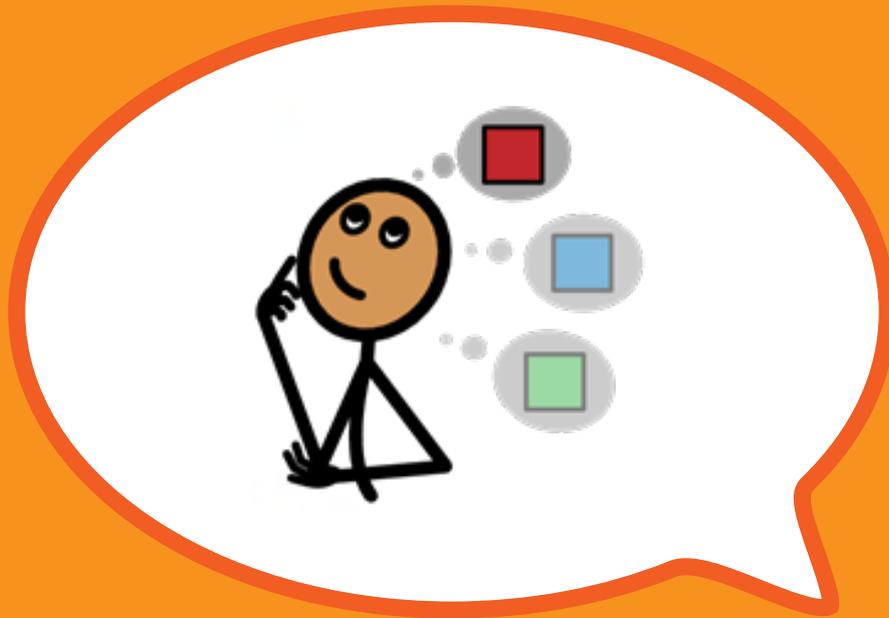






# Part 2

Support my decision making



## Give me plenty of support

If I do not make decisions regularly, I may need time to learn.

 **Your support for my decision making can help me learn and make the difference for me leading and directing my life (or not).**





# Build choice making into decision making

Present choices verbally, physically and visually

*“What T-shirt would you like to wear today?”*





# Use your knowledge of me to offer me options

- Keep asking yourself how you can include me in the process of making decisions which have an impact on me
- Use your knowledge of me, so you can act on my will and preferences.
- Observe my reactions and what they mean

Examples:

- Things I might like to do
- People I might like to see
- How I might want to use my funding





# Explore options with me



**What are some of the decisions I already make?**

**What new decisions could you help me make?**





# Allow me time and space to think about my decisions

Give me:

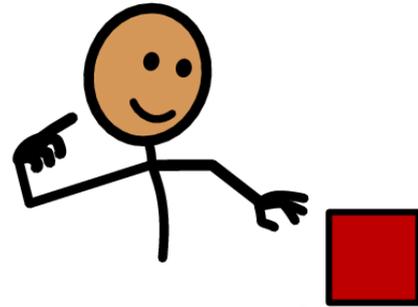
- Plenty of information, so I can make an informed decision
- Time to think
- Space to think





## When I'm making my decision

- Be aware of your own bias and don't try to influence me
- Consider my dignity to take risks
- Support me to understand what's good and bad about my options
- Confirm my choice with me





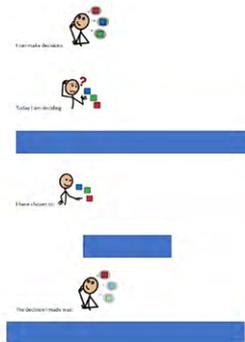
# Model your own decision making

*“What can I eat today? Salad or a sandwich? I had salad yesterday. Today, I feel like a sandwich.”*

Keep a record of my decisions.



**By doing this, you remind me and my supporters about what I am learning.**



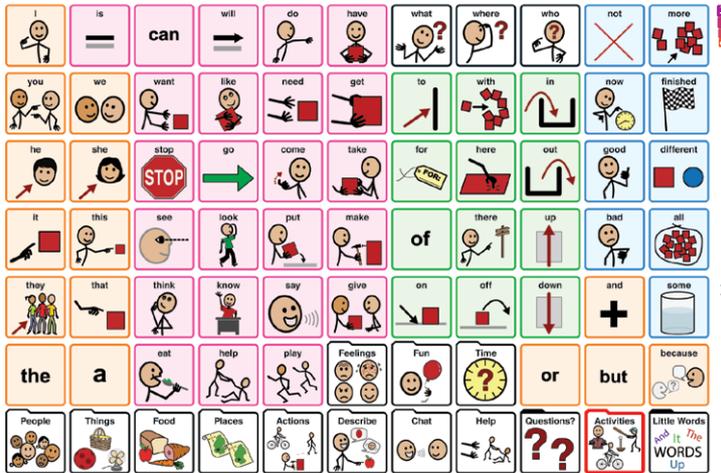


# Model the language of decision making





# Modelling language and decision making



AssistiveWare

Proloquo2Go® Crescendo core word board





# Modelling language and decision making

## Key take away messages

- ✓ Visual communication tools need to be shown to people in everyday situations
- ✓ It's okay if they don't work the first time
- ✓ Keep offering visual supports throughout decision making opportunities





# Keep trying!

- I may need time to learn new skills



- Maybe you do, too

- Get support to develop your skills for supporting my decision making

- Brainstorm with others, share ideas





## Picture credits

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