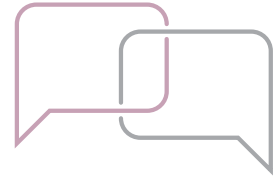




# COMMUNICATION TIPS

## GENERAL TIPS



1

### Talk to the person

Direct your conversation to the person rather than anyone with them (e.g. support person)

Get to know the person and their communication (including any communication aids they use). Ask them what works for them with communication

2

### Allow time

Don't rush the communication - allow the person time to take in information and respond, don't jump in with what you think they are saying

3

### Check for understanding

Ensure that participants understand the activity or message. You can do this by asking a specific question such as: "How many items can you steal from the nest at one time?"

Ask the person what will help with communication

4

### Ensure respectful interactions

Use your usual tone and volume of voice (don't speak more loudly than normal unless the person asks you to)

Don't pretend to understand, let the person know you are having difficulty; try asking yes or no questions or other cues "can you show me what you mean?" to help

If someone has limited or no speech don't assume they don't understand what you are saying

If the information the person wants to talk about is private (e.g. information about their disability), make sure you are in a space that maintains their privacy and confidentiality

5

### Consider social parts of communication

Some people may struggle with social aspects of communication such as understanding non-verbal cues, making or holding eye contact or understanding social 'rules' such as turn-taking in conversation or knowing how close to stand to someone when talking. Model what to do in social interactions, but don't force things like eye contact (just because someone isn't using eye contact doesn't mean they're not listening to you, in fact they may find it easier to listen if they are not having to also concentrate on trying to give eye contact)

Some people may struggle with understanding more abstract aspects of communication such as sarcasm, jokes, phrases that may have two meanings. So, be mindful that unintentional misunderstandings may occur and learn from them

6

### Consider where you are communicating

If background noise and a busy environment are making communication difficult for the person suggest moving somewhere quieter

7

### Don't overthink it!

Just do your best - everyone makes mistakes; apologise if you believe you have said something in error or embarrassed someone or if you haven't been able to understand them

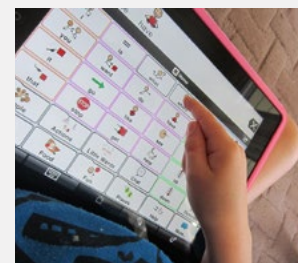
The main thing is to include everyone and make them feel as comfortable as possible, this will get easier as you get to know each person over time





## COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Some people require Alternative or **Augmentative Communication (AAC)** systems to help them communicate. These can be divided into two main categories: unaided and aided.



### Unaided AAC systems

Does not require external tools

- Gestures
- Facial expressions
- Sign language

### Aided AAC systems

Uses external tools

#### Low-tech tools:

- Pictures or photos
- Communication boards

#### High-tech tools:

- Speech-generating devices
- Communication apps
- Eye-gaze systems

## AUSLAN

Auslan is the sign language used by some members of the deaf community in Australia. It is its own unique language with a different grammar and word order than spoken English. If someone uses Auslan an interpreter would be required to help you communicate with them

## KEY WORD SIGN

Some people with other communication challenges use Key Word Sign (KWS) alongside spoken language to help them communicate. KWS uses many signs from Auslan, but some are different. Using some signs when you communicate can also help others understand you. Signs like 'help', 'more', 'wait', 'finish', 'toilet', 'drink', 'break', 'ball', 'sore/pain', 'good', may be some useful key signs to learn.

## INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

### 'A Way with Words'

provides guidelines around what terms to use with the aim of promoting inclusiveness and preferred portrayal of people with disability.



['A Way with Words' document](#) →

### Key Word Sign Australia



[Key Word Sign Australia website](#) →

### Auslan Sign Bank



[Auslan dictionary online](#) →

### Augmentative and Alternative Communication



[Speech Pathology Australia website](#) →