



Communication using Symbols

A Carer's Training Pack



Learning Objectives

- Gain a basic understanding about communication and active listening to build conversations
- Make use of free images and symbols with labels, phrases and sentences to support communication in your setting
- Encourage meaningful conversations to support well being



Contents

1. How we communicate
2. Managing conversations
3. Finding the right words and images
4. Adapting images and symbols for each individual
5. Creating opportunities to encourage conversations



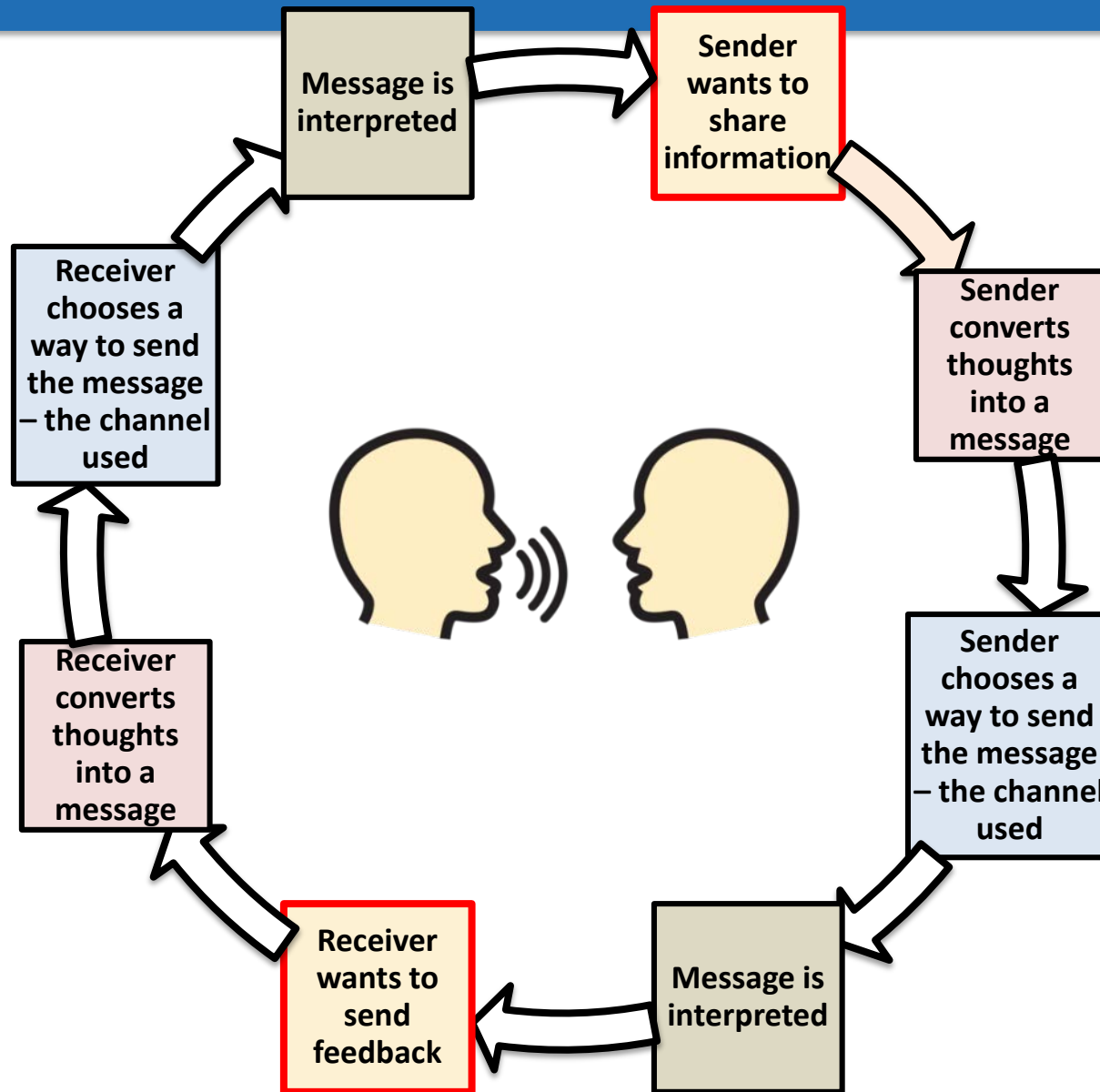


Topic 1



How we communicate

Sending and receiving messages



Message breakdown



Barriers to Communication



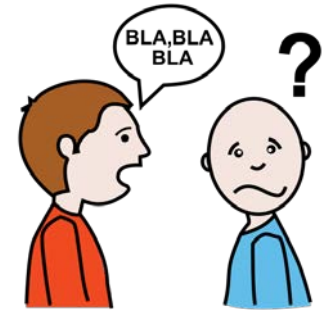
Situational



Physical



Sensory



Cognitive



Sending messages in several ways

- gestures
- signing
- eye contact
- facial expression
- touch
- body movement
- posture
- sounds
- space
- drawing
- writing
- symbols
- pictures
- photographs
- emojis
- objects
- technology



Communicate without speaking

- A gesture: “I fell off my bicycle and hurt my knee”
- A drawing: “I need to walk home now”
- A facial expression: “I am tired and want to go to sleep”
- Emojis on a phone: “I do not like being cold”



End of Topic 1

- How might you apply what you've learned?





Topic 2



Managing Conversations

How do you...

- ... find out the things you want to know?
- ... listen carefully?
- ... indicate that you have understood someone?
- ... know that someone has understood you?
- ... help people to understand you?



Clarifying Communication with Phrases

Sorry, I didn't hear what you said

I'm not quite sure I follow you.

What do you mean by...?

Please could you explain?

Please could you say that again?

Could you give us an example?

Please could you tell me more?

Please say it more slowly?

Could you say that in a different way?

What happened next?

I think I understand but...

Thank you for helping me understand

T.A.L.K.

- **T** = Time
- **A** = Ask
- **L** = Listen
- **K** = Keep Trying



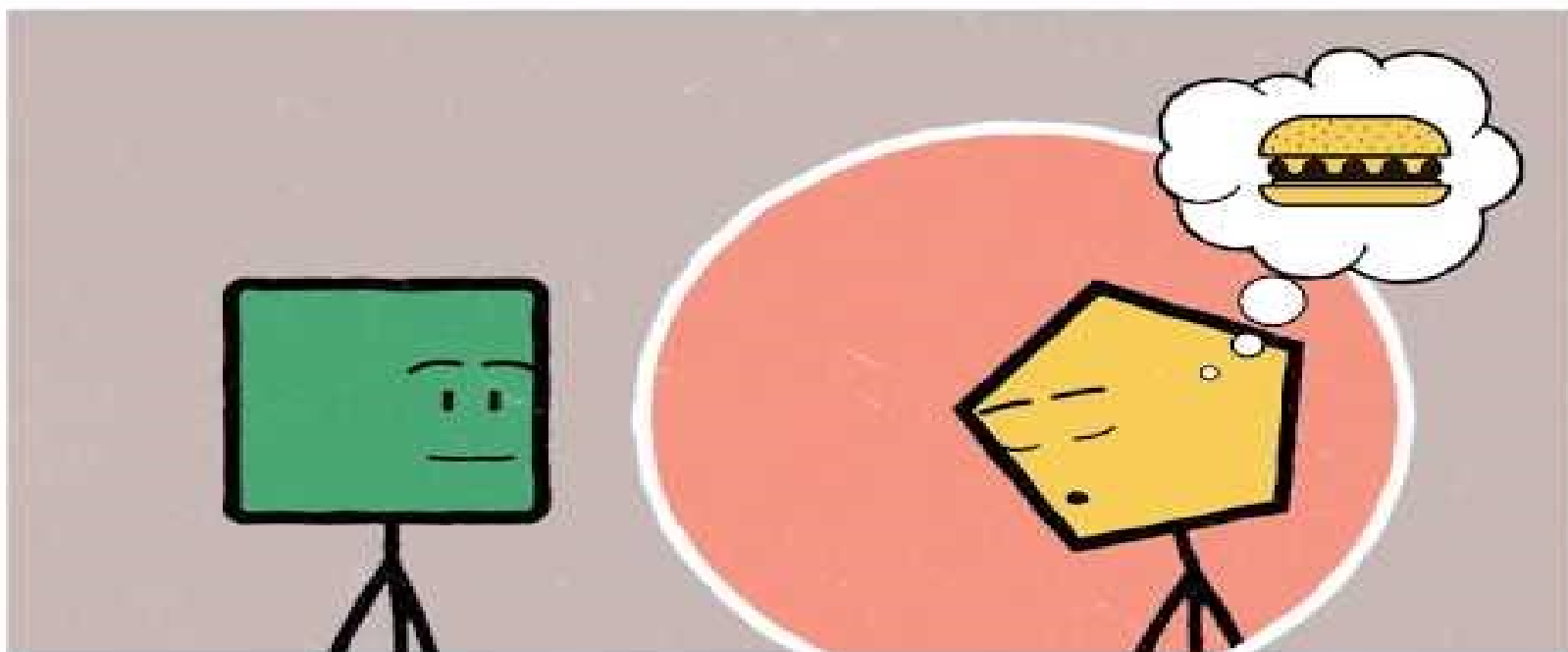
Communication Access UK



Being Ignored



Active Listening



End of Topic 2

- Any questions?





Topic 3



Finding the right words
and images

How could you help Amara?



Amara

- Works long hours in A&E as a nurse.
- Contracted COVID-19 and experienced respiratory difficulties.
- Admitted to ICU where she had mechanical ventilation.
- After three weeks she responds with good eye contact and can point.
- Her understanding and use of speech remains difficult.
- She's improving 😊



Example strategies for Amara

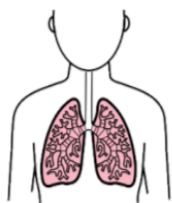


Amara

- Remember Amara is a nurse.
- Gestures
- Use pictures or symbols
- Communication boards
- Alphabet boards
- Keep instructions and requests are simple,
- Repeat if necessary.
- Pause to check for understanding.
- Allow time for spoken replies as speech returns



Images that might support Amara



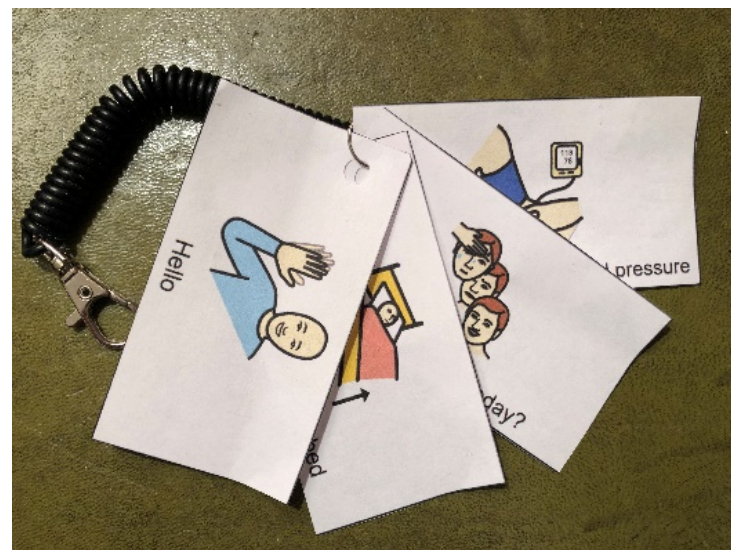
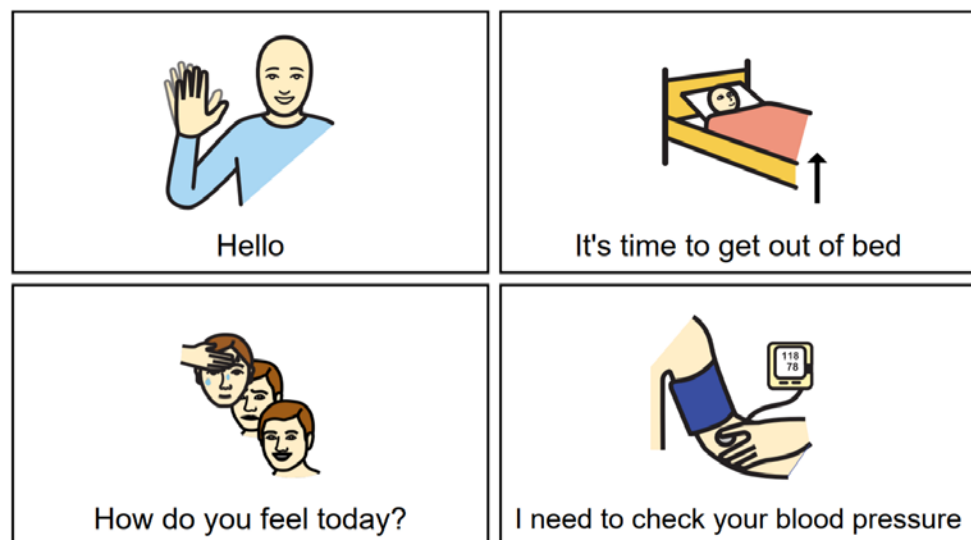
trouble breathing



hot

Portable symbols

Individual cards



Topic based words and phrases

| Food | Drink | Clothes | Medical | Body | Actions |
|------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|---------|-------------|
| bread | alcohol | belt | blood pressure | abdomen | choking |
| butter | chocolate | coat | dizzy | arm | comb hair |
| cereal | coca cola | gloves | fit | back | drowsy |
| chips | coffee | hat | gagging | body | go home |
| cold meal | cold drink | jacket | headache | face | go to sleep |
| dessert | horlicks | jumper | injection | feet | lights off |
| eggs | hot drink | pyjamas | light headed | fingers | lights on |
| fish | ice | scarf | medication | hair | make a call |
| fruit | juice | shirt | mouth wash | hands | massage |
| hot meal | milk | shoes | nauseous | head | quiet |
| meat | tea | slippers | pain | legs | read |
| snack | water | socks | respiratory | neck | rest |
| sugar | bottle | trousers | short of breath | nose | sit up |
| toast | can | T-shirt | sick | stomach | tired |
| vegetables | glass | underwear | suction | teeth | turned |

Topic based words and phrases

| Feelings | Daily Life/Time | Things | People/chat | Personal Hygiene | Places/Transport |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| afraid | bed changing | blanket | carer | bath | cinema |
| angry | bedtime | cigarette | chaplain | bathroom | countryside |
| anxious | breakfast | comb | children | bed pan | home |
| better | change clothes | glasses | doctor | clean | hospital |
| cold | cut toenails | hairbrush | family | shampoo | library |
| comfortable | exercise | handkerchief | friends | shower | park |
| disappointed | get dressed | lighter | nurse | tissue | pub |
| frustrated | get out of bed | lotion | social worker | toilet | restaurant |
| happy | listen to music | mobile phone | therapist | tooth brush | shops |
| hot | lunch | money | don't know | urinal | theatre |
| hungry | prayer | newspaper | don't want | wash body | town |
| lonely | supper | paper | good bye | wash face | ambulance |
| sad | teatime | pen | hello | wash hair | bus |
| thirsty | now | pillow | please | wash hands | car |
| unsure | later | tablet | thank you | wet | taxi |

Food Topic Board

fruit



curry



Daily Topic Board

wake up



exercise



Find images to match your words

- images.google.com
- remove.bg
- globalsymbols.com



Global Symbols

Create account

First Name *

Surname *

Company

Preferred Language

Symbols will be shown in your preferred language where possible.

Email Address *

Password *

Confirm Password *

6 characters minimum

Create Account

remove.bg



Before



After



End of Topic 3

- Any questions?



Topic 4



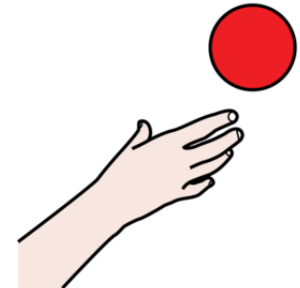
Adapting symbols and images

Finding perfect symbols

- Easy to understand
- Easy to see
 - Consistent style
 - Colour contrast
 - Clear backgrounds
- Simple labels



+s



Information sheets



Have you got Long
COVID?

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/>



Often feeling very tired



Being breathless



Muscle weakness



Joint pain



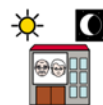
Brain fog



Low mood



Lockdown



Stay at home



put on a mask if you
go out



Exercise with one
person



Keep safe distance
apart



Only essential
shopping



Only essential travel

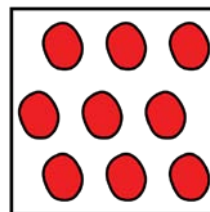


No indoor
entertainment



Don't meet up with
lots of people

Talking whilst using images



How could you help Sarah?



Sarah

- Sarah spiralled into alcoholism
- Moved into sheltered accommodation to support her medication, drinking and epilepsy
- Has fits that leave her confused and incoherent
- Doesn't seem to listen or understand instructions
- Doesn't keep her routine and misses meals, shower and other daily activities



Example strategies for Sarah























Sarah

- Use gestures and body language to reinforce instructions
- Allow extra time
- Use flash cards with symbols of images
- Have daily symbol-support schedules with mealtimes etc.
- Update topic boards as needs and situation changes
- Possible use an iPad so that cards and boards can be modified easily



Sarah's personal chart

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Breakfast 8-9.30am  | porridge  | cereal  | toast  | eggs & bacon  |
| Lunch 12.00 -1pm  | pizza  | sausage & mash  | chicken  | salad  |
| Teatime 4-5pm  | tea  | coffee  | eggs on toast  | baked beans  |
| Supper 8.30-9.30pm  | biscuits  | hot drink  | cider  | cigarettes  |



Full sentence boards

Question



how



what



do



more



to stop



I



am / have



home



bed



doctor



bathroom



you



want



help



medication



drink



food



please



need



to go



get up



in pain



tissues



thank you



feel



ill



to vomit



headache



tummy ache



good



tired



worried



hot



cold



bad



End of Topic 4

- Any questions?





Topic 5



Creating opportunities to
encourage conversations

Considering different types of boards



Camping



Tent



Bag



Friends



like



Not



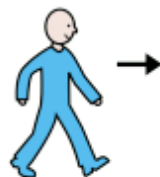
Nice



Music



Come



Go



Cold



Windy

PicSeePal



Ideas for creating conversations



who?
what?
when?
where?
why?
how?



Remember to

- Listen
- Pay attention
- Ask meaningful questions



Using Board Builder

- Time to make our first communication board!



Symbol Creator

- Creating your own symbols, when required.

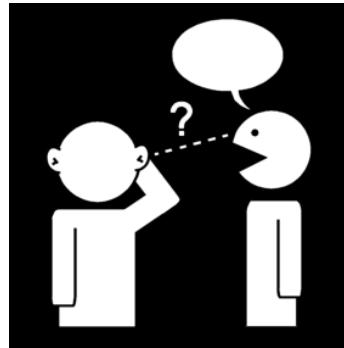


End of Topic 5

- Any questions?



Final Tips



Keep it simple.
Remember to T.A.L.K



Presenter's Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| channel | The way a message might be sent such as via speaking in a language which may or may not be understood by the receiver, email, SMS, phone etc |
| cognitive | Related to the ability to learn, reason, think, remember, have language skills and appropriate social skills. |
| convert | To change, adapt or translate a message into another form such as text or images from spoken language or just an idea in the head. |
| degenerative | An illness that gets worse with loss of function (physical and/or cognitive). |
| interpret | To understand or work out the meaning of a message |
| Motor Neurone Disease (MND) | Affects the brain and nerves causing muscle weakness, difficulty with mobility, swallowing and speech |
| physical | These difficulties are to do with the body's mobility, dexterity and function of the organs |
| rehabilitate | restore (someone) to health or normal life by training and therapy after imprisonment, addiction, or illness. |
| sensory | The five senses humans have: touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. |
| visual aids | Use of images, symbols, emojis, icons to help make the spoken word or text easier to understand. |



From the Global Symbols Team

You can visit the Global Symbols site to [access this free course online with more interactions](https://www.globalsymbols.com), create and download boards and other resources, plus see our other courses:

www.globalsymbols.com

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