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TOTAL COMMUNICATION APPROACH

A GUIDE TO SUPPORT THOSE WITH COMMUNICATION NEEDS



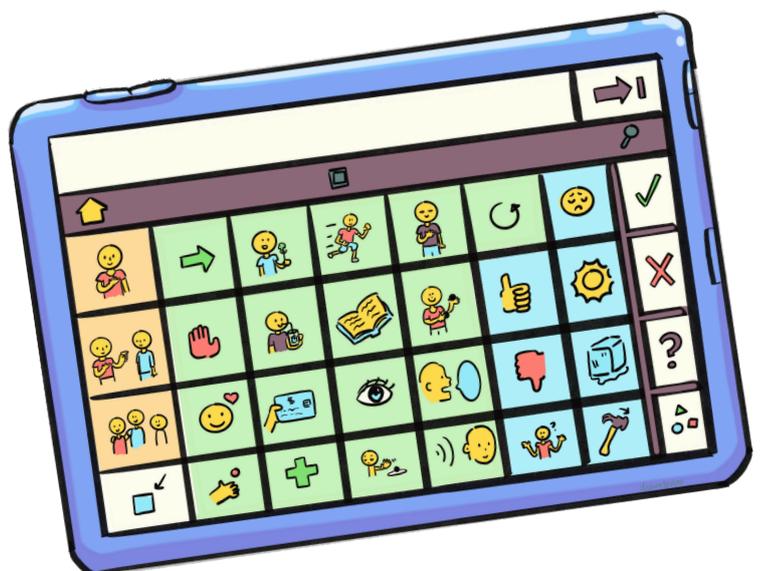
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WHAT IS A TOTAL COMMUNICATION APPROACH?

A total communication approach integrates various strategies to support effective communication for individuals with diverse needs, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal methods. The first step to utilising this approach for a person with language and communication needs is having an up to date profile of their needs, This should be done by a qualified Speech and Language Therapist.



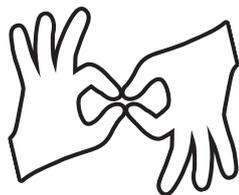
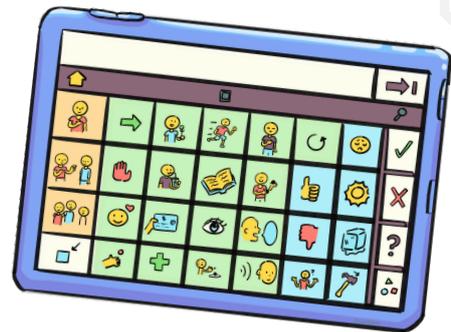
USE OF VERBAL AND NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Utilize both verbal and non-verbal communication methods based on the individual's preferences and abilities.

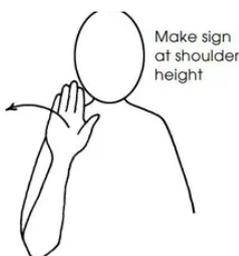


Spoken Language

Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC)

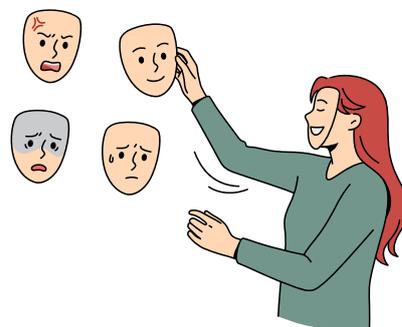


Sign language



Hello/ Hi

Makaton



Facial expressions

VISUAL SUPPORTS

Implement visual supports to enhance understanding and communication clarity. Use visual schedules, visual cues, and visual aids such as pictures, symbols, and written words to reinforce verbal messages and promote comprehension.



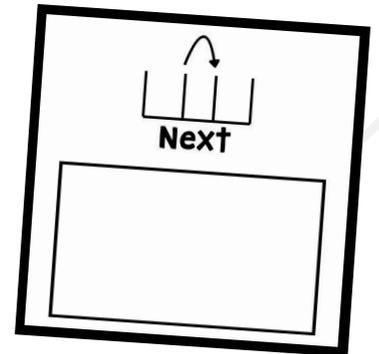
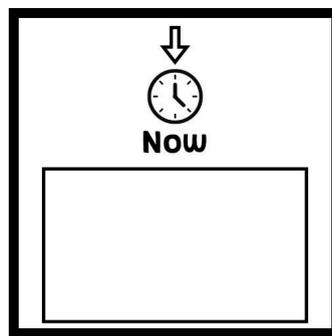
Visual timetables



Picture/Word Cards



Visual cues



Now and Next Boards

SENSORY CONSIDERATIONS

Take into account sensory sensitivities that may affect communication. Create a communication environment that minimizes distractions, respects sensory preferences (e.g., lighting, noise levels), and supports sensory regulation to optimize communication effectiveness.



Smells



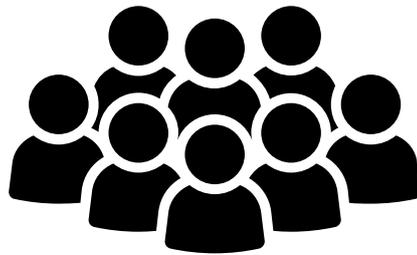
Lighting



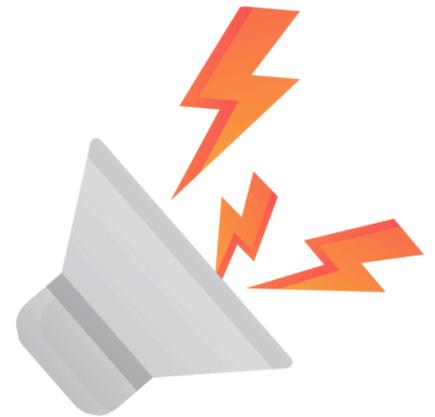
Touch, e.g. fabrics.



Comfort



Overwhelm i.e too many people



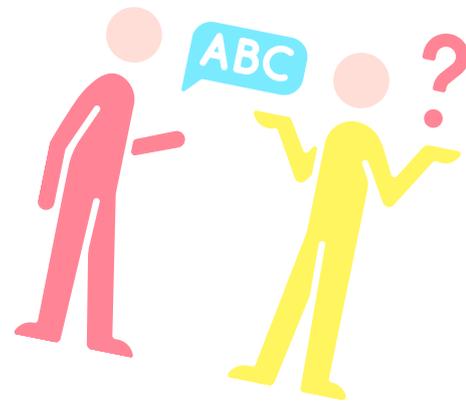
Noise

CLEAR AND SIMPLE LANGUAGE

Use clear, simple language when communicating, avoiding jargon, abstract concepts, or ambiguous statements. Break down complex information into manageable parts and provide concrete examples to facilitate understanding.



“Chunk”
instructions into
smaller parts



Avoid jargon and abbreviations



Be mindful of figurative
language such as idioms



Say what you mean.

BE A RESPONSIVE COMMUNICATION PARTNER

Foster communication by being a responsive and supportive communication partner. Encourage communication attempts, be aware of differing communication styles validate feelings and thoughts, and provide opportunities for the individual to express themselves comfortably and confidently.

- I'M -
HERE
to
LISTEN

I'M
HERE

i'm
PROUD
OF YOU

you are
so
LOVED

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Provide training and support for communication partners, caregivers, educators and professionals involved in the person's life. Offer guidance on implementing effective communication strategies, understanding communication preferences and using AAC devices or supports.



Engage in regular
Continuing
Professional
Development (CPD).



Offer support.



Reflect on communicative
breakdowns.

Respect ALL
communication
preferences.

BE CONSISTENT

Maintain consistency in communication approach and strategies across different settings and interactions. Reinforce learning and practice through repetition, positive reinforcement and knowing when to adjust when needed and when to contact an SLT if you are feeling lost.



Carry your knowledge over to all settings.



Be consistent.



It's okay to feel lost sometimes - reach out to an SLT.



Share your knowledge with colleagues.

ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT

Advocate for the person's communication rights and empower them to advocate for themselves. Promote self-determination in communication choices, respect their preferences and ensure access to inclusive communication environments and opportunities.



Take a strengths based approach.

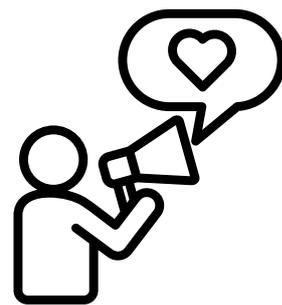
Your
VOICE
MATTERS

Use your voice to promote the person's right to self determination.

Proud
of you

YOU
ARE
BRAVE

Use language that is positive and affirming.



Promote advocacy.

SUMMARY

In summary, a total communication approach combines various verbal and non verbal methods tailored to the person's individual needs. By incorporating ALL methods of communication available to the person we foster inclusive environments and promote meaningful interactions.

FURTHER RESOURCES AND READING:

Sense Charity who offer support to disabled people have this total communication approach guide -

<https://www.sense.org.uk/information-and-advice/ways-of-communicating/total-communication/>

Free training about inclusive communication - this is accredited and provides a certificate upon completion.

www.communication-access.co.uk

Communication Matters - provider that aims to increase communication accessibility in the UK.

www.communicationmatters.org.uk

ABOUT

Jamie (She/Her) is a Speech and Language Therapist based in Kent, England. She is available for face to face services in Kent and remote services all over the U.K. If you have any questions about this leaflet, please visit:

www.adhdslt.co.uk or email Jamie at adhdslt@outlook.com

