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How to use a communication board

Communication boards can help people who cannot talk or have speech that is difficult to understand.

1. Introduce yourself

Ask: *Do you need help? How can I help you?* If someone has a communication difficulty and you don't understand their message – offer a communication board.

2. Choose the right board

Show the picture board, word board and spelling board. Say: I'm having difficulty understanding you. Would you like to use a board? Which one would you like to use?

3. Instructions for using a picture board or word board

- Place the communication board on a stable surface in front of the person so they can easily see it and reach it.
- When the person can point independently
 - Ask the person to point to what he or she wants to say.
 - Check you understood the message, e.g. Are you asking about?
 - Look for a Yes or No response.
- When the person cannot point independently
 - Ask the person to show you how they say Yes and No.
 - Say: I will point to each message. Say 'Yes' when it is the message that you want.
 - Point to one picture at a time, along each row, and read each message aloud.
 - When the person indicates Yes, confirm that you have understood the message.
- If the person cannot use the communication board, you may need to ask someone who knows the person well to assist.