



# Autonomy in Decision Making

An introduction and overview of the project

## Funding

- This project was funded by a grant received from the Non-Government Centre Support for Non-School (NGCS) Organisations of Western Australia.

## Purpose

- The purpose was to look at ways to improve the participation of students in daily decision making.
- Many students have limited opportunities to participate in both large and small decisions in their life because of perceived barriers and lack of access to robust language systems.
- Whilst still advocating for all students to have access to robust language systems, this project aimed to provide schools (and others) with skills and resources which could support all students (regardless of their communication options) to improve their participation in decision making.

## Terminology

### AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)

An umbrella term used to describe any method of communication which is used to help or instead of speech.

### Complex Communication Needs (CCN):

Someone who is “unable to use speech to meet all of their communication requirements, given their age and culture.”

### Symbolic Communication:

A symbol is anything someone says or does to send a message that describes objects or ideas.

Symbols can include spoken words, gestures, pictures, sounds, manual signing, and writing.

*Example:* Pointing to or reaching for a cup to ask, “This one?” or express “I want that cup”

The development of more complex symbolic strategies (like speech) does not mean we stop using less complex strategies (like pointing).

## Principle: Article 21 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

“Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that PWD can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice.”

# Pressures and Demands

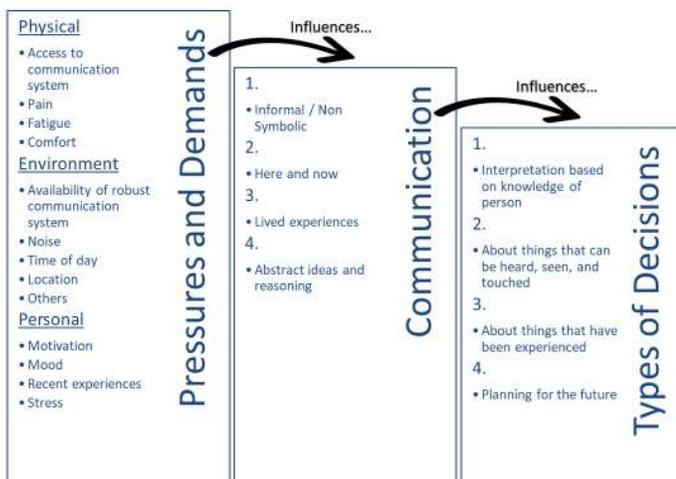
## How pressures and demands can influence decisions

### Pressures and demands

A variety of physical, environmental, and personal factors can create pressures and demands on an individual. Receptive and expressive communication is affected by these pressures and demands.

Everyone's capacity for making different types of decisions varies depending on their ability to understand the situation and express their opinions.

For individuals with complex communication needs and who use AAC to communicate, these pressures and demands can have an even greater impact on both communication and decision making.



### The impact for all

Regardless of someone's communication skills, it is important to consider what pressures and demands are being experienced for appropriate supports and expectations to be in place.

Being prepared and having appropriate supports is essential to effective participation in decision making.

### Informal and non symbolic communication

Examples of informal and non-symbolic communication can look like crying, screaming, laughter, reaching, quieting, and movements.

Communication partners typically need to do lots of interpreting of observable behaviour.

Decisions are usually being made about immediate needs and can look like accepting or rejecting, interest or avoidance.

### Communication about the here and now

Someone who is communicating about the here and now, usually needs other people to know the setting (context) to understand and might include single or a few concepts.

Decisions at this level may be being made about things external to the individual but might be in the immediate environment.

### Communication about lived experiences

Someone communicating at this level does not always require their partner to know or have experienced the same things as them.

Some people may need to have experience with the options to have an informed opinion.

### Communication of abstract ideas and reasoning

Discussion of abstract ideas requires access to a robust language system – one that can express a range of unique and varied thoughts.

Decisions at this level could be about the future and potentially about options the individual has not explicitly experienced.

# Barriers to Decision Making

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## Factors which can create barriers to participation in decision making

### Perceptions and opportunities

In some instances, people around an individual with CCN may not believe them capable of making decisions and therefore do not provide opportunities; or assume they know the individual well enough to represent their views. This can be the greatest barrier to participation.

### Individual

In addition to environmental and perception barriers, there may be individual factors which influence someone's ability to make certain types of decisions at any given time of day.

Understanding how someone is affected by a range of factors is essential to providing the best opportunity to contribute to any decision.

### Time factors

It can take more time for individuals with complex communication needs to process and express language.

It is the responsibility of those around them to provide individuals with CCN time to:

- Process incoming information
- Construct and produce messages
- Prepare and contribute to meetings ahead of time

### Receptive language

Individuals are regularly presented with information which is inaccessible (content or format).

Understanding how an individual needs to receive information to make certain decisions is essential to creating a space for their contributions.

### Expressive language

In some instances, an individual's challenges in contributing an idea is not related to their understanding or thoughts on a topic, but rather their confidence to find or use relevant words to fully express their idea.

It is essential to plan for individuals to have access to and be supported to use communication strategies which facilitate the expression of thoughts and ideas.

### Adult AAC user perspective

**Bob Williams** (fmr USA Commissioner for the Administration of Developmental Disabilities):

"Every person, regardless of the severity of their disability, has the right and ability to communicate with others, express everyday preferences, and exercise at least some control over their daily life.

Each individual, therefore, should be given the chance, training, technology, respect and encouragement to do so."

**Melinda Smith** (Mentor, public speaker, artist, advocate, communication consultant, advisor):

"Just because you know me doesn't mean you can read my mind or express my words for me".

# Resources Pack

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## Resources pack summary

### Assessments

- Independence continuum
  - Establishes insight into current skills and potential target skills which contribute to increasing someone's independence in decision making
- Decision Inventory
  - Provides a snapshot of how much an individual participates in a range of decisions

### Individual planning documents

- Decision making profile
  - Establishes a snapshot of current strategies needed to support an individual to make decisions and express opinions
- Communication dictionary
  - Current expressive strategies used by the individual
  - Valuable for individuals at all stages of communication
- Decision planning template
  - Helps prepare for making decisions
- Decision making agreement
  - Used as a record for decisions which are important to the individual

### Information handouts

- Preparing for Planning and Workplaces
- Decision making skills – levels 1-5

### Communication partner strategies

- Modelling AAC
- Verbal referencing
- Offering choices
- Partner Assisted Scanning
- Descriptive teaching (& planning document)
- Talking Mats (& planning document)

### Self-Reflections

- Self-reflection sheets for communication partner strategies
  - Provides communication partners with a breakdown of strategies and a structure to continually assess their own performance.

### Visual supports

- Core communication board
- Options book
- Talking mats examples
- Descriptive teaching examples by topic
  - Protective behaviours
  - Planning meetings
  - Emergencies

# Resources Pack

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# Assessments

This document is designed to establish insight into current skills & potential target skills. It is not a standardised assessment and is best completed in consultation with a range of communication partners & the individual wherever possible. This document DOES NOT and SHOULD NOT be used to describe someone’s potential.

Individuals may demonstrate skills in more than one level and are not required to demonstrate mastery of one level before exploring skills in other levels.

Individual’s details		People helping to complete this form	
Name:		Name:	
Age:		Name:	

### Expressive communication strategies (being used by the individual)

<input type="checkbox"/> Body movements & gestures	<input type="checkbox"/> Hands (pointing, touching...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Text (writing, typing, letter selection...)
<input type="checkbox"/> Facial expressions	<input type="checkbox"/> Manual signs (Auslan, Key Word Sign...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Electronic AAC: Type:
<input type="checkbox"/> Eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> Real objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic AAC: Type:
<input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Speech	<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures (photos, PCS, SymbolStix...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Something else: Details:

### Receptive communication strategies (being modelled by others)

<input type="checkbox"/> Body movements & gestures	<input type="checkbox"/> Hands (pointing, touching...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Text (writing, typing, letter selection...)
<input type="checkbox"/> Facial expressions	<input type="checkbox"/> Manual signs (Auslan, Key Word Sign...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Electronic AAC: Type:
<input type="checkbox"/> Eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> Real objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic AAC: Type:
<input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Speech	<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures (photos, PCS, SymbolStix...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Something else: Details:

### Summary

Best description of current skills	Emergent	Emergent to contextual	Context dependent	Contextual to independent	Independent
Decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expressive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Skill area: Decision making

Date:

<b>Emergent (Stage 1) – Expressing preferences</b> 	<b>Not Observed 0</b>	<b>Developing 0.5</b>	<b>Established 1</b>
It helps to have a familiar person to interpret expressive behaviours successfully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expresses:			
• A person/ action/ thing is liked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A person/ action/ thing is not liked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• An opinion about a person/ action /thing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/4
<b>Receptive (Stage 2) – Affirm or deny</b> 	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Confirms how actions are interpreted (e.g., a smile to say “you guessed it”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicates an interpretation was incorrect (e.g., a frown to say “that’s not what I meant”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicates when something is not understood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adds conditions to a choice (e.g., “yes, but...”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asks for something not offered (e.g., something different)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5
<b>Early expressive (Stage 3) – Elaborate &amp; describe</b> 	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Expands on preferences – express the why (e.g., “Don’t like. Too noisy”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/1
<b>Early conventional (Stage 4) – Rank &amp; compare</b> 	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Compares or ranks choices/options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An environment exists where opinions are expected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/2
<b>Conventional (Stage 5) – Expand Authority</b> 	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
It is known what decisions are being made by & for the individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is known what decisions are important to the individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An agreement is in place as to who has the final say in which decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/3

Adapted from: Sheldon, E. (2019)

## Skill area: Understanding (receptive language)

Date:

<b>Emergent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed 0</b>	<b>Developing 0.5</b>	<b>Established 1</b>
Starting to show understanding that symbols represent ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pictures & picture symbols are used by others to help understanding & teach expression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows anticipation of steps in familiar routines & activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pays attention to an object or activity with partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/4
<b>Emergent to contextual skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Responds to common natural gestures (e.g., come here, go away, hi)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows understanding of the use of common objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pictures seem to help improve understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Starting to follow simple directions in familiar routines & activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows understanding of symbols for basic, common, or concrete items	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5
<b>Context dependent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Shows understanding of symbols for common objects & actions (e.g., run, paint, eat), people, or situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows understanding of more abstract concepts (e.g., think, big, hot, few)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follows simple instructions in both familiar & unfamiliar routines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pays attention in general conversations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/4
<b>Contextual to independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Shows understanding of general conversations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follows more complex or unusual instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knows what accommodations are needed to support understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/3
<b>Independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Advocates for accommodations to support understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/1

*Adapted from: Janice Light & David McNaughton (2014)*

## Skill area: Expressive language

Date:

<b>Emergent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed 0</b>	<b>Developing 0.5</b>	<b>Established 1</b>
Uses facial expression, body language, gestures, &/or behaviour (usually understood only by very familiar people)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicates acceptance or rejection (e.g., smile or turning away)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tries to communicate in familiar & motivating activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is helped by others to communicate successfully (e.g., narrowing choices, interpreting body language)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/4
<b>Emergent to contextual skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Uses clear & simple symbols during motivating situations & activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses one symbol at a time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directs use of gestures, body language, facial expression, or behaviour at a communication partner (reliability varies from day to day or activity to activity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/3
<b>Context dependent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Uses a combination of methods to express messages (e.g., gestures/pointing, picture symbols, speech/voice, AAC device).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beginning to comment &/or ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates best in routines, about familiar topics, & with a familiar partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beginning to combine two or more symbols to create longer messages (e.g., want+drink; I+like; it+yuck)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beginning to combine two or more strategies (e.g., point+verbal word; sign+picture symbol)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5
<b>Contextual to independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Communicates about a range of topics with both familiar & unfamiliar partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistently combines 2 or more symbols to create longer, more complex &/or an increased variety of messages for different reasons (e.g., comments, questions, or sharing information)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses a wide variety of vocabulary or communication tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/3
<b>Independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Combines single words, spelling, & phrases to communicate about different subjects like peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses words/messages available to describe unavailable words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Links sentences using conjunctions (e.g., and, because, if, that, but)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/3

*Adapted from: Janice Light & David McNaughton (2014)*

## Skill area: Strategic competence

Date:

Emergent skills	Not Observed 0	Developing 0.5	Established 1
Shows understanding that communication can change the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows that a message was not successfully understood (e.g., shows displeasure or frustration)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/2
Emergent to contextual skills	Not Observed	Developing	Established
Gets partner's attention before communicating a message	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses simple repair strategy (repeating message) if needed (e.g., if misunderstood, ignored, or the system did not speak/activate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is helped by others identifying possible communication methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/3
Context dependent skills	Not Observed	Developing	Established
Uses an introduction strategy with unfamiliar communication partners with some help (e.g., something to show they use a device to help communicate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is engaged during conversations to monitor attention & understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses more repair strategies (e.g., repeat, rephrase, additional key word, first letter clue...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses simple strategies to increase speed of communication (e.g., key words, pre-stored)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persists in repeating message when intended message is misunderstood or system did not activate/speak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5
Contextual to independent skills	Not Observed	Developing	Established
Independently uses an introduction with unfamiliar partners (e.g., descriptive instructions on how to best communicate with them)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates plan to contribute to a conversation (e.g., I have a question; I want to tell you about...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognises message was not understood & alerts the communication partner (e.g., wrong, try again; let me tell you another way)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proactively manages the interaction (e.g., interjects with "wait", "hang on", or "yeah")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signals a topic change or end with appropriate message	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5
Independent skills	Not Observed	Developing	Established
Independently uses several strategies to prevent or repair communication breakdown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plans ahead to contribute effectively to a conversation (e.g., compose & store messages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selects a communication mode appropriate to situation & listener	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creatively uses system features to communicate effectively & efficiently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independently analyses errors in communication interactions & comes up with strategies to address it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5

*Adapted from: Janice Light & David McNaughton (2014)*

## Skill area: Operational competence (specific to aided AAC use)

Date:

<b>Emergent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed 0</b>	<b>Developing 0.5</b>	<b>Established 1</b>
Attends to AAC system (e.g., by looking at it, quieting to listen, or moving towards it)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explores the device (not always for obvious communication reasons)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/2
<b>Emergent to contextual skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Transports AAC system in familiar activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positions AAC system for use or indicates the positioning needs to change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses basic navigation (e.g., back/home button, swipe, turn page)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognises if AAC system needs adjustment (e.g., volume, not working)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turns system on/off when appropriate (or asks for other to do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5
<b>Context dependent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Asks for help if equipment needs adjustment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjusts volume appropriate to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charges device (or asks others to do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjusts screen/position for best visibility & access (or asks other to do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigates to a logical page during familiar routines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clears & deletes messages independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps to add words by selecting symbols or choosing from suggested message choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transports AAC system from one activity to another or asks others to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/8
<b>Contextual to independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Cleans device or asks others to do independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participates in programming by identifying additional topics or vocab	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participates in programming by selecting appropriate buttons for editing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjusts volume appropriate to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigates to logical page for new or unusual activities/topics/partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigates to different message tools (e.g., phrases, keyboard, visual scenes, photos...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/6
<b>Independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Combines different message types or tools to communicate (e.g., phrases, keyboard, photos...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arranges equipment maintenance (e.g., upgrades, troubleshooting, starts repair procedures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programs system independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accesses additional features (e.g., remote controls, text messaging, social media, computer control...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses additional software features (e.g., word prediction, pronunciation exceptions, & editing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5

## Skill area: Social

Date:

<b>Emergent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed 0</b>	<b>Developing 0.5</b>	<b>Established 1</b>
Reacts to familiar people &/or motivating activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Takes turns in familiar & motivating routines (e.g., "high five" or when someone spreads arms for a hug)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
May respond to close physical interaction by looking, smiling, or reaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/3
<b>Emergent to contextual skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Shows clear preference for certain objects, activities, &/or people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
May be starting to show some interest in social interactions, especially in specific situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Starting to use symbols to interact for social reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helped by others to maintain an appropriate distance during interactions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/4
<b>Context dependent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Starts conversations & social interactions with familiar communication partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benefits from help to take additional turns in conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Answers questions in familiar situations with familiar communication partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asks questions of others in familiar situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains an appropriate distance during interactions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/5
<b>Contextual to independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Uses socially appropriate comments/questions to start conversation with familiar communication partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Answers routine questions with a variety of communication partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriately uses comments/questions to start conversations with familiar communication partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses appropriate strategies to change topic or end a conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participates in clubs/groups related to interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independently manages conversations with unfamiliar people in familiar situations or situations of interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/6
<b>Independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Maintains relationships beyond family and paid support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independently manages conversations with unfamiliar people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/2

\*Appropriateness of behaviour will always depend on the people and situation

*Adapted from: Janice Light & David McNaughton (2014)*

## Skill area: Literacy

Date:

<b>Emergent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed 0</b>	<b>Developing 0.5</b>	<b>Established 1</b>
Plays with books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is attracted to pictures in books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
May be using a pencil to draw	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
May be scribbling with some letter like shapes recognisable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/4
<b>Emergent to contextual skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Producing letter strings (not words)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grouping letter strings (unintelligible words)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows an interest in shared reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is starting to engage with books independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to identify own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to identify commonly seen words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/6
<b>Context dependent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
May group letters & start to produce one or two real words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literacy skills include:			
• Identifying/recognising letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Connecting some letters with corresponding sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Understanding word boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Recognising high frequency sight words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Reading & writing name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Beginning to spell words (unconventional spelling sometimes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/7
<b>Contextual to independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Literacy skills include:			
• Increased awareness of link between letters & sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Uses conventional spelling of simple words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Adding word endings as appropriate (e.g., past tense '-ed', plural '-s', or '-ing'),	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Understanding the connection between spoken words & print.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses word prediction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makes choices about preferred writing strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helped by using screen reader technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/7
<b>Independent skills</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>
Incorporates spelling to express uncommon words / words not in communication system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses spelling as primary communication method	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocates access to preferred writing strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocates access to required reading accommodations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			/4

*Adapted from: Sturm J., Cali K., Nelson N., Staskowski M. (2012)*

# Decision Inventory

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of decisions an individual may contribute to and potential areas which could be a focus of improvement.

There is space to include additional decisions relevant to someone’s life.

## Scale: How much control does the individual have in a decision

- 0 ..... Not known
- 1 ..... Someone else makes the final decision – the individual’s preferences are not known
- 2 ..... Someone else makes the final decision – based on preferences inferred by others
- 3 ..... Someone else makes the final decision – based on preferences expressed by the individual
- 4 ..... The individual makes the final decision – with input or support from other people
- 5 ..... The individual makes the final decision – with no input or support from other people

Lower scores provide an opportunity to increase the participation of the individual. In some cases, a scenario may not have come up or been considered before.

Sometimes it is appropriate (given someone’s age or situation), for someone else to make the final decision.

This is an opportunity to actively seek input from the individual or plan for how the individual can participate as much as possible in the decisions which affect them.

Individual’s details	
Name:	<input type="text"/>
Age:	<input type="text"/>

People helping to complete this form	
Name:	<input type="text"/>
Name:	<input type="text"/>

Date:

Everyday Decisions	0	1	2	3	4	5
• What to wear	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• Hair style	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• What to eat	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• Where to sit	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• Who to work with	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• What to read	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• What to watch on TV/Online/Movies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• Who to invite to parties	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• Exercising	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• How early to get up	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• How late to stay up	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• Spending time with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• Participating in sports	<input type="checkbox"/>					
• How to communicate at different times of the day	<input type="checkbox"/>					
•	<input type="checkbox"/>					
•	<input type="checkbox"/>					
•	<input type="checkbox"/>					
•	<input type="checkbox"/>					
•	<input type="checkbox"/>					

# Decision Inventory

<b>Career &amp; Education Decisions</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• What subjects to do at school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
• Doing extra study (university/vocational courses/online courses...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Work experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Applying for work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Saving money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Spending money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Personal Decisions</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Where to live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Who to live with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Which service provider to work with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Communication methods to have available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Where to go on holiday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Having a social media account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Hobbies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Voting in elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Getting a driver's license						
• Smoking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Drinking alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Religion (whether or not to have one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Participating in cultural/religious practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Expression of gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sexual experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Individual Planning Documents

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of current strategies used to express myself. This does not describe my potential. Please take the time to get to know what my communication looks and sound like.

There is no hierarchy. Please accept all forms of communication as valued and valid.

<b>My Name</b>	<b>Filled out with...</b>	<b>Date</b>

**Watch out for me using**

<input type="checkbox"/> My body (movements, gestures...)	<input type="checkbox"/> My hands (pointing, touching...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Text (writing, typing, letter selection...)
<input type="checkbox"/> Facial expressions	<input type="checkbox"/> Manual signs (Auslan, Key Word Sign...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Electronic AAC: <i>Type:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> My eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> Real objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic AAC: <i>Type:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> My voice <input type="checkbox"/> Speech	<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures (photos, PCS, SymbolStix...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Something else: <i>Details:</i>

What I do	What this could mean	What you should do



# Decision-Making Profile

## What others need to know to support me to participate in decision making

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of current strategies that support me to make decisions and express opinions. This does not describe my potential. You should also refer to my Communication Dictionary.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>How I express preferences (like/dislike)</b>	<b>How I say 'Yes' and 'No'</b>
How I show I <u>like</u> something:  How I show I <u>do not like</u> something:  Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbally (select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Conventional head movements (nod/shake) <input type="checkbox"/> Aided (e.g., a communication device) <input type="checkbox"/> Unconventionally: Yes: - E.g.: No: - E.g.:
<b>How I express my priorities (rank preferences)</b>	<b>How I need options presented</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Written (select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Picture symbols <input type="checkbox"/> Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Read aloud <input type="checkbox"/> Videos <input type="checkbox"/> Something else:

# Decision-Making Profile

What others need to know to support me to participate in decision making

## Things that help me make decisions

- Written information (select all that apply)
- Picture symbols
- Photos
- Personal experiences
- Extra time
- One decision at a time
- Planning ahead
- Something else:

## Things that do not help me make decisions

- Written information (select all that apply)
- More than one decision at a time
- Time pressure
- No personal experience of the options
- Sensory differences:
- Something else:

## Times that are good for making decisions

- After I have eaten (select all that apply)
- After sleeping
- After some medication:
- Certain times of day:
  - Morning
  - Midday
  - Afternoon
  - Evening
- Something else:

## Times that are not good for making decisions

- When I am hungry (select all that apply)
- When I am tired
- After some medication:
- After making other decisions
- Certain times of day:
  - Morning
  - Midday
  - Afternoon
  - Evening
- Something else:

## Key life experiences I want you to know about

Based on the work of Helen Sanderson Associates: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>

# Decision Planning Template

Use in conjunction with a Decision-Making Profile & Communication Dictionary

This sheet is designed to help prepare for making decisions. Refer to an individual's Communication Dictionary and Decision-Making Profile to ensure the best environment possible for contributing to decisions and providing opinions.

## Describe the decision

*What decision needs or wants to be made? Describe the whole decision.*

## Who is involved?

*Who is impacted by the decision?*

## What are the consequences?

*What could happen if a decision is made, and what could happen if a decision is not made?*

## What is the timeframe?

*When does a decision need to be made? Is there a set time or is it flexible?*

## Who is the decision important to?

*Who is it that cares about the outcome of the decision?*

## What is the scope of the decision?

*What elements of the decision can be controlled? Are there any fixed elements? (e.g., budget)*

## What is influencing this decision?

**Resources:**

**Restrictions/Limitations:**

*Based on the work of Helen Sanderson Associates: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>*

# Decision-Making Agreement

Use in conjunction with the Decision-Making Profile to improve choice and control

This should be reviewed regularly to make sure the situations are kept up to date. A talking mat about how I feel about the importance of different situations could be used to help develop and review this document.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Who helped complete this document</b>	<b>Strategies used to get my opinions</b>

**Situation where it is important for me to have choice and control**

<b>Decision/situation that is important to me:</b>	<b>Who else I want involved:</b>
<b>How I want to be involved:</b>	<b>Who makes the final decision:</b>
<b>What I need to be involved in this decision:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Me
	<input type="checkbox"/> Someone Else <input type="text"/>
	<i>(after listening to my opinions and preference)</i>

**Situation where it is important for me to have choice and control**

<b>Decision/situation that is important to me:</b>	<b>Who else I want involved:</b>
<b>How I want to be involved:</b>	<b>Who makes the final decision:</b>
<b>What I need to be involved in this decision:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Me
	<input type="checkbox"/> Someone Else <input type="text"/>
	<i>(after listening to my opinions and preference)</i>

# Decision-Making Agreement

Use in conjunction with the Decision-Making Profile to improve choice and control

## Situation where it is important for me to have choice and control

Decision/situation that is important to me:

Who else I want involved:

How I want to be involved:

Who makes the final decision:

Me

Someone Else

(after listening to my opinions and preference)

What I need to be involved in this decision:

## Situation where it is important for me to have choice and control

Decision/situation that is important to me:

Who else I want involved:

How I want to be involved:

Who makes the final decision:

Me

Someone Else

(after listening to my opinions and preference)

What I need to be involved in this decision:

## Situation where it is important for me to have choice and control

Decision/situation that is important to me:

Who else I want involved:

How I want to be involved:

Who makes the final decision:

Me

Someone Else

(after listening to my opinions and preference)

What I need to be involved in this decision:

Based on the work of Helen Sanderson Associates: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>

# Information Handouts



# Preparation for Planning & Workplaces

Increasing the opportunities to learn about and actively participate in decisions

## Purpose

- This document has been put together to help identify areas in which individuals with complex communication needs may be supported to contribute more autonomously to planning and decisions that affect them.
- This is not an exhaustive list and will hopefully provide some inspiration to individual circumstances.

## Links to the Australian Curriculum

- The School for Special Educational Needs & Australian Curriculum highlights the importance of students taking a leading role in their own transition planning.
- To develop the capabilities and skills to make meaningful contributions, students need opportunities to learn and practice self-determination. The communication needs of some students may require them to develop some of their contributions in advance or over time.
- This recognition of the importance of being active in planning, and the importance of experience, learning. Prior preparation can be applied beyond school contexts.

## No Assumptions

- People often make assumptions about an individual's ability to be involved in decision making and may assume they know the individual well enough to represent their views.
- This contributes to some individuals having decisions made for them, reduced experience in self-advocacy, and taking a passive role in making decisions about their lives.

## Planning Ahead

As much as possible, prepare the individual for decisions and contributions ahead of time.

Examples of how this can look:

- Explicit teaching of relevant terminology
- Ensure access to robust language systems and relevant words throughout the process
- Getting to know how the individual communicates
- Getting to know how the individual makes decisions
- Finding out what helps to make decisions
- Providing opportunities to experience options
- Collecting the opinions in a safe, quiet space before any formal meeting

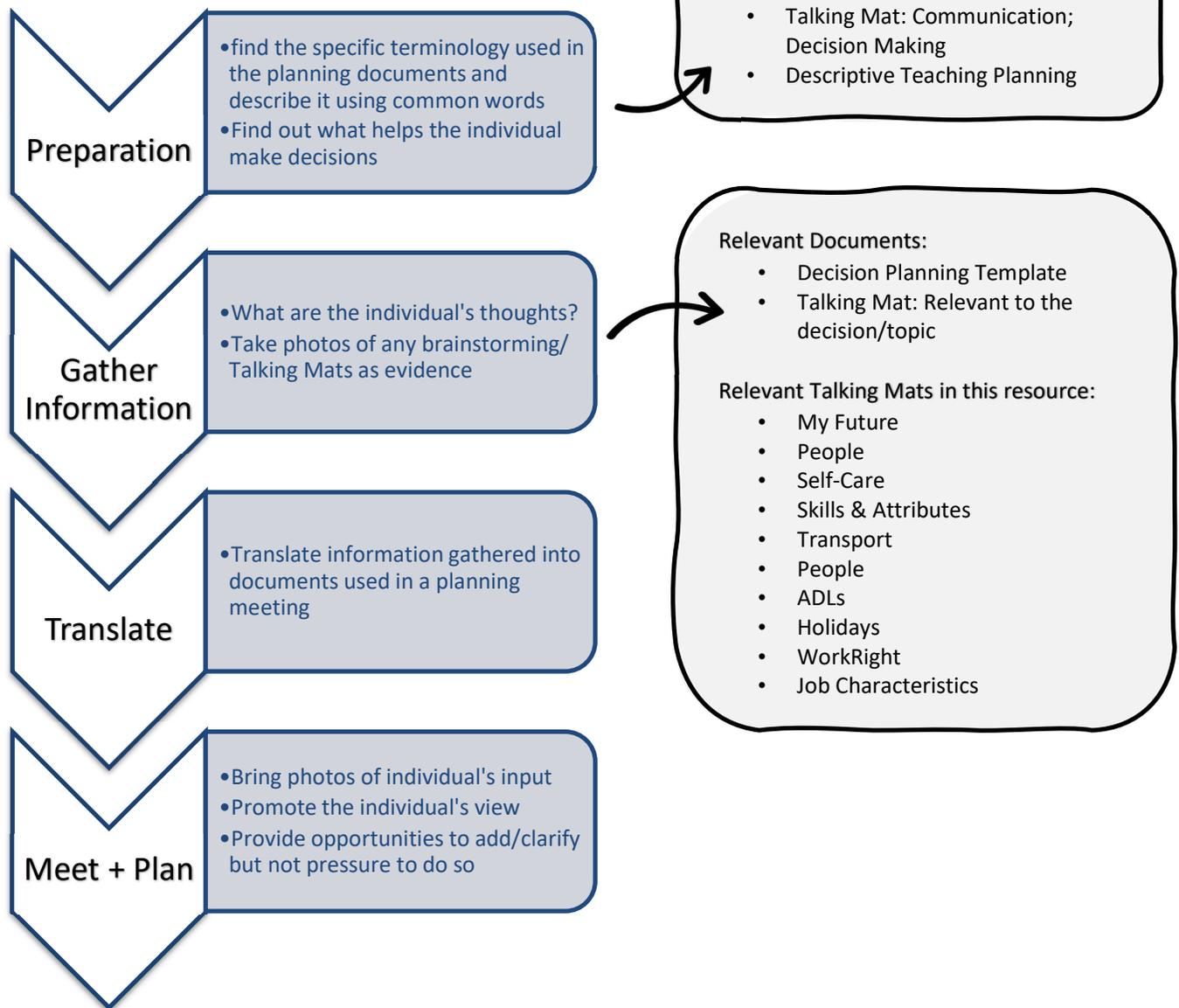
# Planning Meetings

## Preparing to contribute and succeed

### Planning Meetings

Planning meetings often have a range of templates onto which the information gathered is entered.

The following process and the linked resources provide an example of increasing input from individuals with complex communication needs:



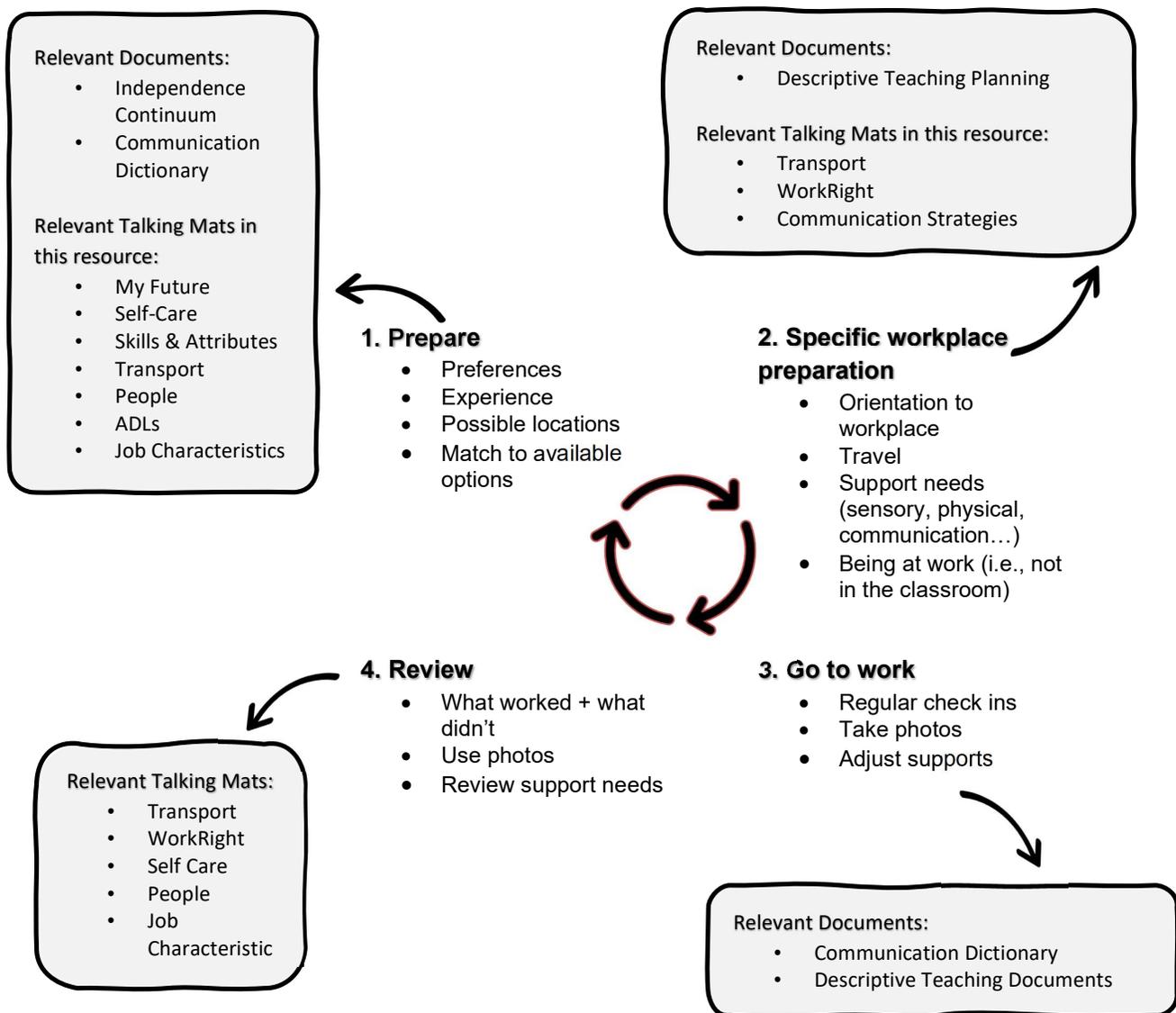
# Workplace Learning

## Cycle of continual review

### Workplace Learning Cycle

When individuals begin their journey to entering the workforce, it can be difficult to know what kind of work they will enjoy.

The following process and the linked resources provide an example of increasing input from individuals with complex communication needs as they gain more work experience:





# Decision Making Skills: 01 Emergent

Expressing preferences

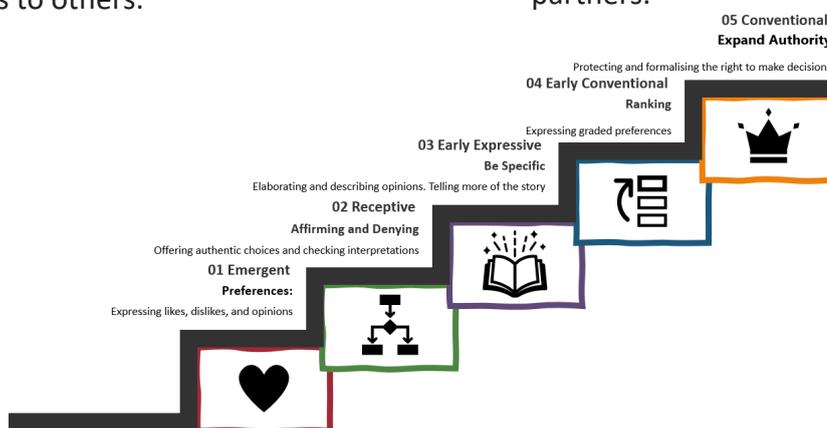


## An individual demonstrating skills at this stage may:

- Rely on others to interpret their facial expressions, body language, and behaviours.
- Show (either directly or indirectly) they like an option by smiling or seeking that option out regularly.
- Show they dislike an option by frowning pushing something away, avoiding the option regularly (or by any other behaviour observed).
- Need help to understand they are expressing a preference, or establish consistent ways of expressing their preferences to others.

## Goals at this stage:

- Notice and respond to the individual's expressive behaviours.
- Create experiences of being understood.
- Support the individual to express their likes, dislikes, and opinions.
- Support communication partners to be consistent in how they understand and respond to the individual's preferences.
- Increasing opportunities for interaction with diverse partners.
- Reduce misunderstandings and frustration.
- Ensuring someone has both the means and opportunities to communicate effectively with an increasing number of communication partners.



# Decision Making Skills: 01 Emergent



Strategies to support an individual demonstrating skills at this stage

## Personal Communication Dictionary

A communication dictionary is a valuable tool for an individual who has complex communication needs.

It contains information about the unique or unconventional ways they communicate, and what others should do in response.

The dictionary acts as a common reference for understanding and interpreting what the individual is doing and how others should respond.

The individual has the chance to receive consistent feedback about their communication and enhance their learning.

## Modelling Augmentative and Alternative Communication Strategies

Using AAC strategies to highlight spoken words can support an individual to understand what is being said to them as well as add clear language in a way they could access in the future.

Someone at an emergent stage of communication can benefit from lots of examples of lots of different communication methods being used to express real ideas.

## Self-talk statements

By describing their own thoughts and behaviours, communication partners can give an individual a model for how they might express their own thoughts in the future.

## Verbal referencing

This strategy is used to describe the different ways someone communicates and a description of the interpretation of that behaviour.

For individuals at an emergent stage of communicating and decision making, other people often need to interpret their actions and behaviour.

For someone to learn to be more independent in expressing their thoughts, others need to be very clear about what is being seen, and how that is being interpreted.

### Steps of verbal referencing:

1. Describe the behaviour
2. Describe the interpreted meaning
3. Give time and space for contributions

### Example of verbal referencing:

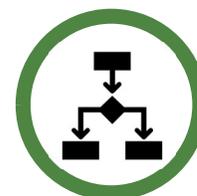
“You’re covering your ears.” ← description

“Maybe you don’t like this.” ← interpretation



# Decision Making Skills: 02 Receptive

Affirm, Deny, Agree



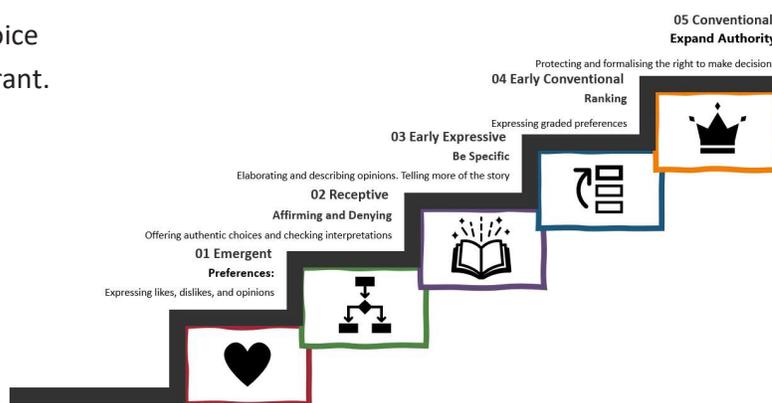
## An individual demonstrating skills at this stage may:

- Still be relying on others to interpret their facial expressions, body language, and behaviours
- Be able to confirm that the interpretations of others are correct or incorrect
- Show that an interpretation is correct by smiling, or incorrect by frowning (or by any other behaviour observed).
- Need help to add conditions to their choices (yes coffee, but with no milk)
- Need help to ask for something which has not been offered.
- Not a choice if can ask for something that was not offered.

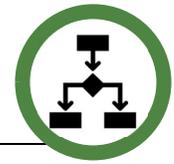
Selection from a 'menu' is not choice unless you can choose the restaurant.

## Goals at this stage:

- Offering authentic choices and checking interpretations
- Support the individual to express whether they are being interpreted correctly
- Support communication partners to be consistent in how they understand and respond to the individual's preferences
- Increasing opportunities for interaction with diverse partners
- Ensuring someone has both the means and opportunities to make real choices, and not have those choices limited by others.



# Decision Making Skills: 02 Receptive



## Strategies to support an individual demonstrating skills at this stage

### Personal Communication Dictionary

A communication dictionary is a valuable tool for an individual who has complex communication needs.

It contains information about the unique or unconventional ways they communicate, and what others should do in response.

The dictionary acts as a common reference for understanding and interpreting what the individual is doing and how others should respond.

The individual has the chance to ensure their choices are recognised and respected.

### Modelling Augmentative and Alternative Communication Strategies

Using AAC strategies to highlight spoken words can support an individual to understand what is being said to them as well as add clear language in a way they could access in the future.

Modelling language helps an individual see their communication strategy being used to:

- Add conditions to choices  
("I'd like a coffee, with milk and no sugar")
- Ask for other options  
("What else?"; "Something different")
- To show they do not understand  
("I don't understand")
- To correct someone's assumption  
("You're wrong"; "That's not it")

### Verbal Referencing

This strategy is used to describe the behaviour of an individual and provide them with an explicit interpretation of that behaviour.

Describing an individual's behaviour can help them refine that behaviour. It can also provide a way of giving feedback about how clear their communication attempts have been.

#### Example of verbal referencing:

"You're smiling. That tells me yes I got it right."

### Offer Authentic Choices

For a choice to be authentic the following options must be an accepted answer:

- None of these  
(Either the choice I want is not being offered, or I do not want to make a choice)
- Something different  
(What I want is not being offered)
- Tell me more  
(I want more information about that choice)
- But...  
(I am making this choice, under this condition)

### Inviting Responses

Creating an opportunity as well as an explicit invitation to respond is important in helping someone to know they are included and their input is valued.

An invitation to respond does not mean someone MUST respond.



# Decision Making Skills: 03 Early Expressive

Being specific

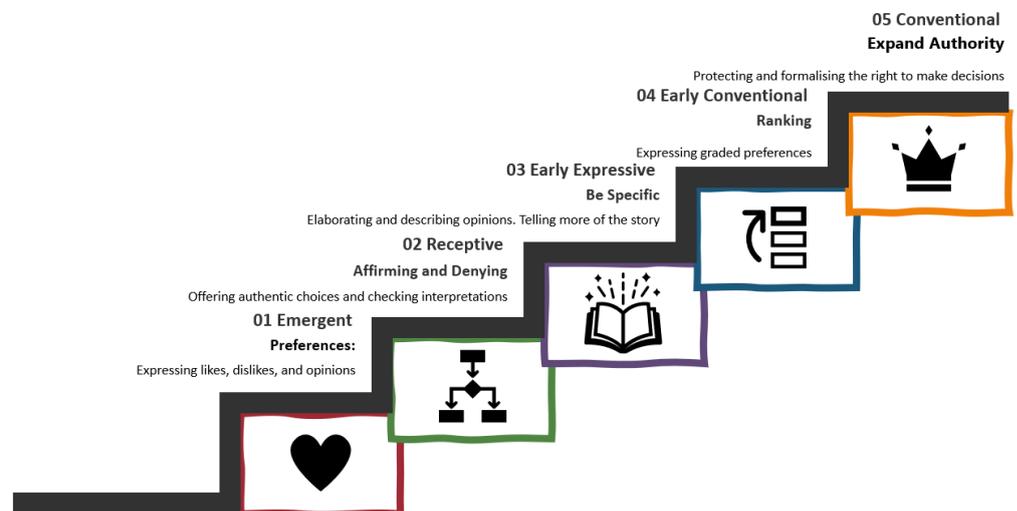


## An individual demonstrating skills at this stage may:

- Elaborate on their choices to describe the reason for their opinion.  
“Don’t like. Noisy”
- Demonstrate an understanding of abstract choices, given the required information.

## Goals at this stage:

- Elaborating and describing opinions to tell more of the story.
- Support the individual to express ‘why’ they have that opinion.
- Support communication partners to be consistent in how they understand and respond to the individual’s opinions.
- Invite responses which expand with a ‘why’
- Expand a response to explain further details about an opinion.
- Ensuring someone has both the means and opportunities to expand their message to be more specific.





# Decision Making Skills: 03 Early Expressive

Strategies to support an individual demonstrating skills at this stage

## Personal Communication Dictionary

A communication dictionary is a valuable tool for an individual who has complex communication needs.

It contains information about the unique or unconventional ways they communicate, and what others should do in response.

The dictionary acts as a common reference for understanding and interpreting what the individual is doing and how others should respond.

The individual has the chance to ensure their choices are recognised and respected.

What I do:	What this could mean:	What you should do:
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## Modelling Augmentative and Alternative Communication Strategies

Using AAC strategies to highlight spoken words can support an individual to understand what is being said to them as well as add clear language in a way they could access in the future.

Modelling language helps an individual see their communication strategy being used to:

- Explain why  
“I don’t like it. It’s too cold”  
“I want to live here. It is with my friend”

## Verbal Referencing

This strategy is used to describe the behaviour of an individual and provide them with an explicit interpretation of that behaviour, and then add further information about that opinion.

This starts to add more detail about how the individual could express and describe their opinions.

Being able to elaborate on an opinion can help others start to understand why and provide information.

“You’re covering your eyes. I think you do not like this. Maybe it’s too bright”

## Receptive Communication Charts

A receptive communication chart can be valuable tool for an individual who has complex communication needs and difficulty processing speech by itself.

It provides people with information on how that individual needs to receive information to best understand it.

The tool can be used to:

- Describe what is needed to support a verbal explanation
- Provide a consistent structure to explanations

We need to tell them:	To do this we:	Helped and supported by:
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# Decision Making Skills: 04 Early Conventional

## Ranking and Comparing

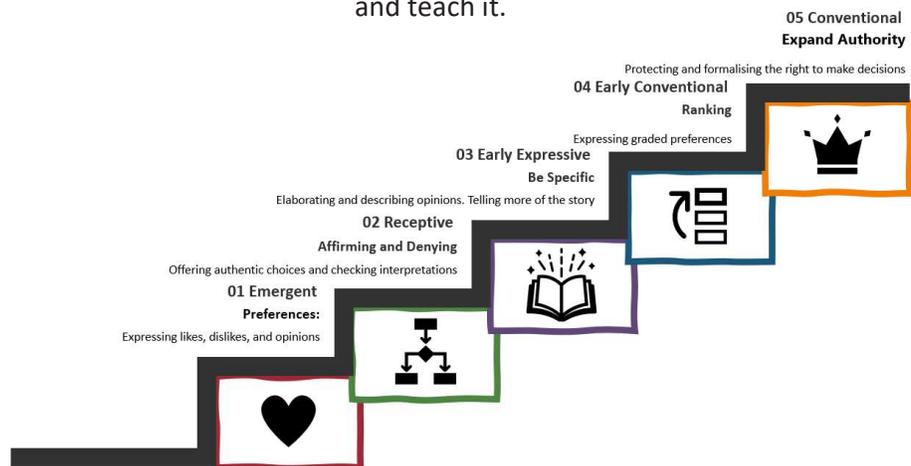


### An individual demonstrating skills at this stage may:

- Use language or behaviours which ranks options.  
“I like these, but I like this one the best”
- Use language or behaviours which compare options to each other.  
“This one is better than that one”
- Expect to be asked their opinion.

### Goals at this stage:

- Introducing the concept of ranking.
- Use everyday opportunities to rank (thumbs up) – they expect to be asked about their opinion.
- Support communication partners to be consistent in how they understand and respond to the individual’s opinions.
- Creating an environment in which opinions are expected to be given by all.
- Ensuring someone has access to words that support ranking.
- Creating a structure to express a preference and teach it.



# Decision Making Skills: 04 Early Conventional



Strategies to support an individual demonstrating skills at this stage

## Personal Communication Dictionary

A communication dictionary is a valuable tool for an individual who has complex communication needs.

It contains information about the unique or unconventional ways they communicate, and what others should do in response.

The dictionary acts as a common reference for understanding and interpreting what the individual is doing and how others should respond.

The individual has the chance to ensure their choices and preferences are recognised and respected.

## Modelling Augmentative and Alternative Communication Strategies

Using AAC strategies to highlight spoken words can support an individual to understand what is being said to them as well as add clear language in a way they could access in the future.

Modelling language helps an individual see their communication strategy being used to:

- Compare and rank options  
“I like these. I like this one more”  
“This is my top choice”  
“I prefer this one”

## Verbal Referencing

This strategy is used to describe the behaviour of an individual and provide them with an explicit interpretation of that behaviour.

Describing an individual’s behaviour can help them refine that behaviour and link it to language being modelled.

It can also provide a way of giving feedback about how clear their communication attempts have been.

“I can see you’re giving me a big thumbs up and smile. This is one you like the most”

## Talking Mats

This is a tool which uses visual communication symbols to support a discussion around a particular topic.

Talking Mats give an individual another way to express their views. There are no right or wrong answers in a Talking Mat session, and each session follows the same structure.

The tool can be used to:

- Support understanding
- Reduce memory demands
- Provide a structure to answer open questions
- Give individuals processing time
- Discuss a topic in a non-confrontational way
- Supplement existing AAC strategies



# Decision Making Skills: 05 Conventional

## Expanding Authority

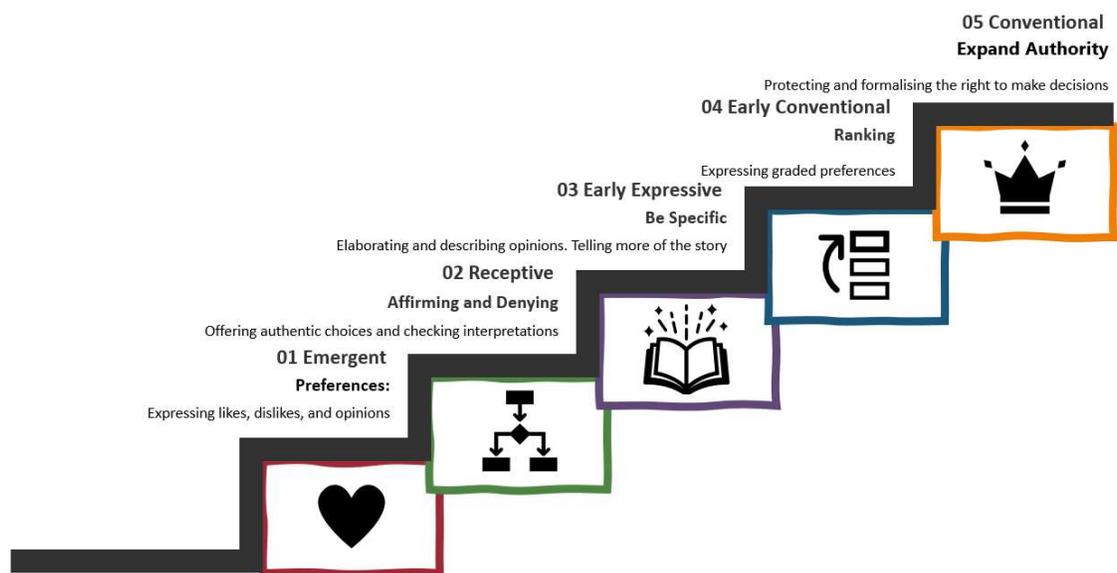


### An individual demonstrating skills at this stage may:

- Use language or behaviours that let others know what types of decisions are important to them.
- Able to demonstrate skills of all other levels.
- Expect to be asked their opinion

### Goals at this stage:

- Protect the individual's right to make decisions.
- Ensure agreements are in place to know which decisions the individual is making.
- Ensure that what is important for the individual is understood and documented.
- Move towards giving more choice and control to the individual.
- Ensure someone always has access to their communication supports.



# Decision Making Skills: 05 Conventional



## Strategies to support an individual demonstrating skills at this stage

### Personal Communication Dictionary

A communication dictionary is a valuable tool for an individual who has complex communication needs.

It contains information about the unique or unconventional ways they communicate, and what others should do in response.

The dictionary acts as a common reference for understanding and interpreting what the individual is doing and how others should respond.

The individual has the chance to ensure their choices and preferences are recognised and respected.

What I do:	What this could mean:	What you should do:
------------	-----------------------	---------------------

### Decision Making Profile

A tool designed to establish a snapshot of current strategies that support an individual to make decisions and express opinions.

This tool can include information on:

- How preferences are expressed (both positive and negative).
- How yes and no is communicated.
- How priorities are expressed.
- How options need to be presented.
- What helps to make decisions.
- What does not help to make decisions.
- Times that are good and not good for making decisions.

### Decision Making Agreement

This is a tool that identifies which situations are important to an individual and sets out a process for making decisions in each situation.

Information within this tool sets out:

- Decisions or situations that are important.
- Who else they want to be involved.
- How the individual wants to be involved.
- What supports are need to be involved.
- Who makes the final decision.

### Talking Mats

This is a tool which uses visual communication symbols to support a discussion around a particular topic.

Talking Mats give an individual another way to express their views. There are no right or wrong answers in a Talking Mat session, and each session follows the same structure.

The tool can be used to:

- Support understanding
- Reduce memory demands
- Provide a structure to answer open questions
- Give individuals processing time
- Discuss a topic in a non-confrontational way
- Supplement existing AAC strategies

# Communication Partner Strategies



# Partner Skills: Modelling AAC

## Speaking AAC to teach AAC

### What is AAC?

- AAC is short for: Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- Augmentative Communication:  
Strategies used at the same time as speech  
Can make communication clearer or more specific
- Alternative Communication:  
Strategies used to help if speech is difficult or unavailable
- Lots of people use different forms of AAC throughout their day

### Unaided AAC

- AAC strategies that use the body and face
- Examples include gesture, manual signs, and facial expression

### Aided AAC

- AAC strategies that are external to an individual
- Can be electronic or non-electronic
- There are hundreds of types of aided AAC
- Examples include dedicated software and apps, photo books, picture symbol books, keyboards, cards...

### What is 'Modelling' with AAC?

- Using AAC strategies (aided and unaided) to highlight speech and messages using a form the individual might later use
- Modelling is a way to teach AAC, not test it

### Why do we model AAC?

- Modelling aided and unaided AAC strategies gives individuals an example of how they might communicate later
- It creates an environment where using AAC is a 'normal' way of communicating
- Modelling is **not** done to 'get' someone to say a particular message



### Consent



- Always get consent before using someone else's aided system. This could look like: a nod, a smile, no negative response...
- Respect a person's right to refuse a request. Do not assume that a "yes" yesterday is a "yes" today
- Be ready with an alternative copy of someone's system in case they say no

# Communication Partner Skills: Modelling AAC

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## Teaching AAC by using AAC to express your own messages

### Step 1

Be prepared

- Get to know how to say at least a few words using the AAC system
- Have another copy of the system to use or practice with
- Get to know the individual, how they communicate, and how they use their AAC system

### Step 2

Observe the individual

- What are they interested in right now?
- What activities are they engaged by?

### Step 3

Initiate that something is about to be said by modelling the way the individual would initiate. One way to do this could be to raise your hand and say: "I have something to say!"



### Step 4

Ask before using someone's system or use a different copy

### Step 5

Say the message. Point to/press words on the AAC system at the same time

### Step 6

Wait.

Show the individual they have the floor. Give them space to participate if they want to

\*There is no requirement for them to do so\*

### What to model?

As many different types of language functions as possible. [www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/consider-communication-functions](http://www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/consider-communication-functions)

Changes to word structures can also be modelled, e.g., ways to add plurals or tenses (-ed & -ing). [www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/teach-grammar](http://www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/teach-grammar)

### How much?

Try to model one level above what the individual is currently doing now

If they are using single words, model two-word combinations

Complete sentence can be used when speaking, even if only key words are modelled

### When?

Any time. As often as is possible. Any time the opportunity to talk comes up

### Who?

Everyone, even the individual's peers, should be given the opportunity to use AAC to communicate. Conversations around consent are important to have with everyone

### Improving modelling skills:

- Get another copy of an individual's aided system (or at least part of it):
  - Free copy of an app
  - Paper copy of at least the first page
- Start by modelling a few words at a time until confidence improves



# Partner Skills: Verbal Referencing

Saying what you see

## What is 'Verbal Referencing'?

Verbal referencing is a strategy where someone describes what they see an individual doing, and then describes the interpretation of what is seen

### The goal

- Help the individual tune in to what they are doing, and how it is being interpreted so they can do it again (or change what they do) in the future
- Adding language in a way the individual may be able to use to express that message next time
- No-one can know exactly what someone is thinking just by looking at them
- A communication partner should acknowledge that an interpretation is only a best guess, and provide a space that invites someone to correct that interpretation

## Why verbally reference?

- It shows how someone communicating, and the message is 'heard'
- Helps develop problem solving skills:
  - Providing feedback about what how an interpretation is made can help make changes in the future
- Improve an individual's body awareness:
  - Providing feedback about the movements someone makes can help orientate them to what their body is doing
- Model language with individuals who may seem passive in their communication, or is learning how to use language:
  - Highlight small or early communication behaviours
- Provide experience and success in initiating
- Help others get to know the individual better:
  - When describing someone's behaviour, other communication partners can be helped to notice the different ways that individual communicates

# Communication Partner Skills: Verbal Referencing

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## Describing and interpreting behaviour to teach communication skills

### Step 1 – Describe the behaviour

Describe what is seen and answer the question:  
What is the individual doing?

Use language that does not give away opinions  
or feelings

It can be helpful to start with statements like:

- I see...
- I feel...
- I noticed...
- I hear...
- You are...
- It looks like...

This can help individuals understand how their  
internal feelings relate to actions and how those  
actions can be communication

### Step 2 – Interpret the meaning

Tell the individual how their behaviour has been  
interpreted in the form of a statement

It is good to include language which invites (but  
does not require) the individual to correct:

- I think...
- I wonder if...
- Maybe you ...

This can take the pressure off an interaction and  
reduce the number of questions an individual  
gets asked in a day

### Step 3 – Model on an AAC system

Highlight key words on an AAC system the  
individual might be using or learning

This can show individuals a way they might  
communicate the next time they experience the  
same internal feeling

Always get consent before using someone else's  
aided communication system

### Step 4 - Wait

Leave time and space for the individual to  
participate

Waiting gives individuals an **opportunity** to  
confirm/deny our assumptions

Waiting can provide the **space** to add more  
information – but never **require** someone to do  
this

### Examples:

I see you are smiling

I think you **like** this. We can do **more**

Your eyes are closed

Maybe you **do not want** to get up

You pushed it away

I think you are **finished**. We can **stop**

You spat it out

Maybe you **do not want** it. We can try  
something **different**

You are looking at me

Maybe you are **not sure**. I can **help**

You are looking at your watch

I think you are telling me to **hurry up**

I see you looking around

I wonder if you need some **help**

You moved your hand away from your chest

That looks like the sign for **more**

I hear you making a noise

I think you have **something to say**

**Bolded and underlined** words are examples of what  
could be modelled in an AAC system



# Partner Skills: Offering Choices

A choice is only a choice when you can ask for something not offered.

## The types of choices we make

Everyone makes lots of different choices throughout the day ranging from smaller (what to wear) to bigger choices (where to live?)

For most people it is easier to reject options, rather than saying what they want

“What do you want for dinner?” “I don’t know.”  
 “How about a stir fry?” “No, not that.”  
 “Then what do you want?!” “I don’t know!”

For the person being asked it can create pressure to generate a choice and express it, and for the person asking, it can be frustrating to offer options only to have them rejected

## Where the offering of choices comes in

It can take effort for everyone to think of suitable options

A list of choices, like a menu, can help

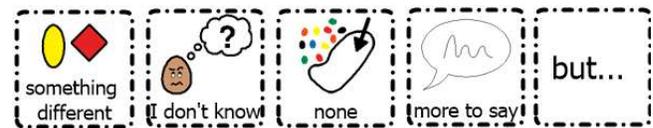
Choice boards and lists can help people know what kind of options are available and are good for small, quick, everyday choices

## The essentials

A choice is only a choice when someone can ask for something that was not offered

At a minimum, a choice board should include a way to say: “Something Different”

It should also consider the following:



*“But...” is important. It helps refine our choice.*

It is important to have someone’s robust communication system available. Always.

If someone does not have a communication system yet, a core board should at least be available

## A choice board or list is not...

A list of choices is not a robust system of language. It is often a list of things, people, or places but without the words to make comments or add nuance to choices

A choice board is not essential to make choices, but it sometimes gives someone ideas about what their choice could be

# Communication Partner Skills: Offering Choices

Choices are like menus. Autonomy is choosing the restaurant.

## Modelling and introducing choices:

Even if someone knows how to point at things to get what they want, there are always things that can be taught when using choice boards

People with complex communication needs are often bombarded with questions which demand a response

Sometimes using a “soft probe” for someone’s opinion with an offer of options can let someone know a choice can be made, but there is no pressure/requirement to do so

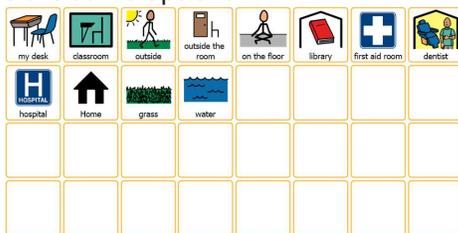
If a choice is regularly offered, consider making a choice board to visualise the options

Example:

“I wonder where you want to go”



“Here are some options”



**WAIT!!**

Give time to process and contribute if they want to

## Reinforcing choices:

Visual resources available can be used to reinforce choices made by someone, even if they have used a different way to express it

Choice boards and communication systems can be used to model language

\*Modelling note: Always ask before using someone else’s system and have a separate copy if possible

Examples:

<p>You pointed to <b>‘on the floor’</b></p>	<p>I have <b>more to say</b></p>	<p>I <b>like</b> it. Let’s <b>go!</b></p>
<p>You have <b>not</b> made a <b>choice</b>.</p>	<p>Maybe you want <b>none</b> of these</p>	<p>We can stay <b>here</b></p>
<p>You walked to the door. I think you want to go <b>outside</b>.</p>	<p>I have <b>more to say</b>.</p>	<p>I can <b>come</b> with you.</p>



# Partner Skills: Making Options Accessible

Using partner assisted scanning to access real choices, every day

## What is 'Partner Assisted Scanning'?

- A way for communication partners to help others by listing or scanning through possible options
- It is an alternative to pointing
- The access methods are only covered here briefly - it is important to find out an individual's preferred communication style

## The goal

- To provide a consistent structure to the way language and (genuine) choices are offered

## Direct/Independent

- If someone uses 'direct selection' this means they are using part of their body to select a choice
- Others may type, sign, or say their choice – this would be independent
- Individuals can also be independent if they access electronic communication using switching, eye gaze, or other strategies

## Formal vs informal scanning

Partner assisted scanning can be used with:

- Formal communication systems (e.g., PODD books, letter boards, communication boards...); or
- Informal opportunities that present themselves during the day (e.g., what to wear, drinks, places to go...)

## Partner assisted – auditory scan

- Options are listed verbally

## Partner assisted – auditory + visual scan

- Options are shown in a visual way (written or picture symbol) **and** verbally listed at the same time

## Partner assisted – visual scan

- Visual choices are pointed to but not labelled

## Partner assisted – eye point

- Choices are shown to the individual in a way they can point with their eyes

## Combination

- Where an individual uses different methods (e.g., eye point to group of options, and then visual scan of those options)

# Communication Partner Skills: Accessible Options

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Things to be aware of, regardless of how choices are offered

## Movements for communication

- A communication dictionary a critical tool for an individual using partner assisted strategies
- Some movements may be different to what someone else might be expecting
- Communication partners must be responding consistently
- Typical accept/reject movements like nodding and shaking head are able to be recognised by more, unfamiliar partners

## One movement – select

- The communication partners must wait the same amount of time between options before moving on
- The amount of wait time should be the longest it takes an individual to respond
- This requires less movement but can take longer and be more cognitively tiring

## Two movements – select and reject

- The communication partner waits for the individual to either accept or reject the option
- This can allow for variability in response times but also requires more movement so can be more physically tiring

## Present all options

- When presenting options as a verbal list or a visual/verbal list, make sure all options are listed
- After the options have been listed, present them again in a way that leaves room for a selection to be made
- This allows for an informed choice to be made

## Include a way to control the conversation

- When someone relies on partners to scan, there is the possibility that only some of a message will be expressed
- Some systems (like alternative access PODD Books) have inbuilt ways individuals control the conversation
- Be sure to include ways for someone to say: “I have more to say”; “mistake”; “I’ve finished”

## Include a way out

- Any list of choices must include (as a minimum): “Something different”
- An individual’s robust language system should always be available to add more to a choice.
- Choosing nothing is also a valid choice

## Consistency & predictability

- Always present options in the same order
- Mixing up the options (either by accident or deliberately) makes the process harder than it already is

## Neutral voice

- Keep a neutral voice when listing options.
- Options can be descriptive (e.g., outside where it is warm, or inside with the aircon)
- Avoid emotive language (e.g., outside where it is yucky and hot, or inside where it is nice and cool)
- Avoid making someone confirm at every step

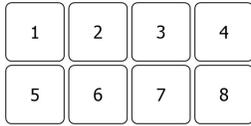
## Recommended further reading

- Centre for Literacy and Disability Studies  
[www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/](http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/)

# Scanning Patterns

## Linear

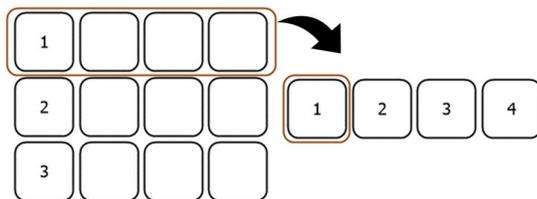
The options are all scanned through one at a time



## Row / Column

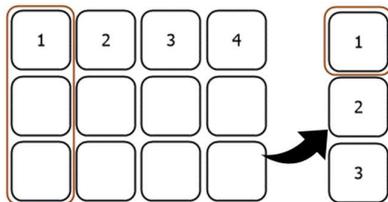
The individual chooses which row their choice is in. Once a row is chosen, the options are scanned in a linear pattern across the row

This can reduce the time taken to get to some options



## Column / Row

The individual chooses which column their choice is in. Once a column is chosen, the options are scanned in a linear pattern down the column



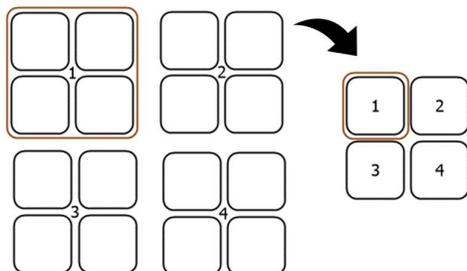
## Group

The individual can choose, or move onto the next, group

Once a group is chosen, the options are listed in a linear pattern

Depending on the size of the group, a row/column or column/row scanning pattern could also be the second step

This option is good for a large number of options or for using a combination access method (e.g., eye pointing to the group and then partner assisted scanning the group)





# Partner Skills: Descriptive Teaching

Using core words to support decision making

## Core vocabulary

- High frequency, reusable, recyclable words
- All languages have a core group of ~400 words that make up ~80% of what is said
- Primarily action words, pronouns (I, he she...), describing words, and words referring to location (up, down, in...)

## Fringe Vocabulary

- Low frequency words which are different depending on the topic
- Primarily nouns

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems

- Robust AAC systems using stored whole words will include a mix of:
  - Core vocabulary
  - Fringe vocabulary
  - Alphabet
  - Phrases.
- The availability of some core vocabulary is consistent across most AAC systems

## Descriptive approach

This is a way of teaching language by describing key concepts using every day and core words

Through this approach, individuals are invited to participate differently by having other ask open questions or making comments that could be added to in lots of different ways

For individuals who use AAC this has the effect of:

- Helping individuals express their ideas in words that are available in their system
- Reducing programming demand
- Reducing navigational demand (by using words that are familiar)
- Improving problem solving and strategic competence

## Referential approach

This is an approach which is very common in many classrooms. There is typically a focus on critical concepts and specific vocabulary

For individuals who use AAC, this can create the need to learn the location of lots of new words that may never be used again

# Communication Partner Skills: Descriptive Teaching

## Planning to succeed

### Step 1 – Content words

- Write a list of content words as they appear in curriculums or relevant documents
- Planning ahead of time is key

### Step 2 – Dictionary definition (optional)

- Find a dictionary definition or write an agreed upon definition of the word
- This can often make Step 3 easier, especially if there is more than one definition of the content word

### Step 3 – Core definition

- Using core vocabulary lists and/or the individual's AAC system, write a core vocabulary description
- This can sometimes be harder than it appears – get other people to help

### Step 4 – Use it

Use the core vocabulary descriptions when talking and asking about the content words

### Examples

Content word (+ dictionary definition)	Core word definition
Dream <i>a cherished aspiration, ambition, or ideal.</i>	Something I want to do How I want to be
Capacity <i>the ability or power to do or understand something.</i>	Things I can do Things I know

### Examples of opportunities to use a descriptive approach:

- Starting a new topic at school or university
- Starting a new job or new role at work
- Engaging in a planning meeting
- Providing opinions on different topics
- Any time there are topic specific words which may be new or challenging to use for someone with complex communication needs

### Consider

- The words available on the individual's specific AAC system (or whether an AAC system is available)
- The individual's current communication skills and strategies

### Resources

- Online core vocabulary lists
- Online dictionaries
- Descriptive teaching planning documents
- Descriptive teaching examples

### References

- Van Tatenhove, G. (2009). Building Language Competence with Students Using AAC Devices: Six Challenges. *Perspectives on AAC*, 18(2), 38-47.
- Witkowski, D., & Baker, B. (2012). Addressing the content vocabulary with core: Theory and practice for non-literate or emerging literate students. *Perspectives on AAC*, 21, 74-81.







# Partner Skills: Talking Mats®

Organising thoughts and expressing opinions

## What are Talking Mats?

Talking Mats is a visual framework that can be used to support people to express their opinions and take a more active role in decision making

## The goal

Support individuals to participate in discussions and decision making around a range of topics

This is not a conversation. The person facilitating the session leaves their opinions at the door

The results of the mat can be used in later conversations

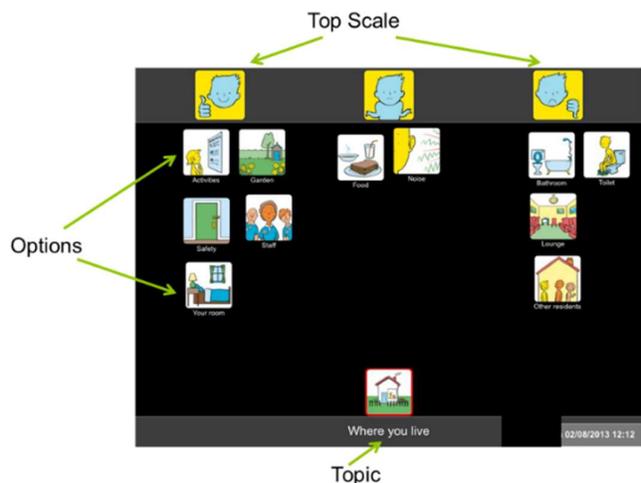
## More information

- [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)
- [talkingmatsaustralia.com.au](http://talkingmatsaustralia.com.au)

## How Talking Mats can help

- Use of visuals can reduce the load on memory and cognition – ideas that have been discussed remain visible and available
- Large topics can be broken into manageable chunks to help the individual think about the different elements
- A pre-planned top scale provides a structure to respond to open questions

## What a Talking Mat can look like



# Communication Partner Skills: Talking Mats

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## Organising thoughts and expressing opinions

### Step 1 – Plan the topic

Plan the top scale and option involved in the topic you want to do with the individual

Ensure the individual has the experiences they need to understand the options

### Step 2 – Set up

Set up in a quiet space

Introduce the Mat, Topic, & Top Scale. Tell them why the mat is being done

Reinforce that there are no right/wrong answers. This is not a test

### Step 3 – Introduce the options

Introduce each option the same way each time

Use an open question:

E.g., "how do you feel about xxx?"

Encourage the individual to place the options under the most appropriate top scale

### Step 4 – Add extra options

Use comments the individual makes throughout the mat session to add items not prepared ahead of time

If a new option is identified, present it in the same way as others (do not assume you know how they feel about it)

### Step 5 - Finish

Starting with the negative side, go through the options. "You've told me..."

Provide an opportunity to change anything.

Take a photo with permission from the individual

### Ideas for when to use

- Preparing for planning meetings
- Preparing for workplace learning
- Helping to express opinions and preferences
- Preparing for a decision
- Getting to know the individual

### Things to keep in mind as a facilitator

- There are no right or wrong answers
- The facilitator can unknowingly influence the individual by offering their own opinions
- If an individual makes a comment, this can be a good opportunity to add another option to the mat
- If a facilitator wants to provide feedback, they should use descriptive language  
"You've told me don't like xxx".
- It is essential that the top scale is kept consistent
- There are ways the presentation of a Talking Mat can be changed to support different people's needs
- Modifications to how a mat is presented could be something to discuss and problem solve with the individual and their team

**Topic**

**Purpose**

**Top Scale**

Picture



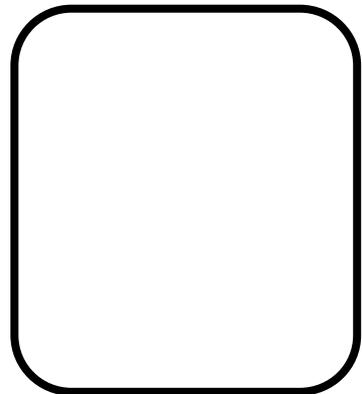
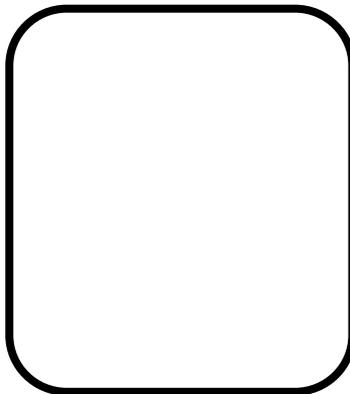
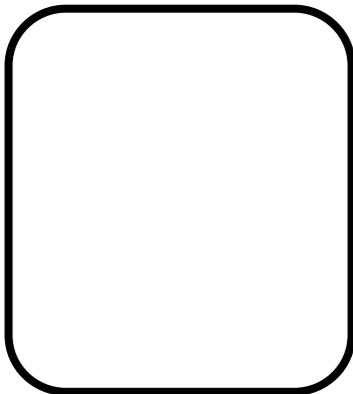
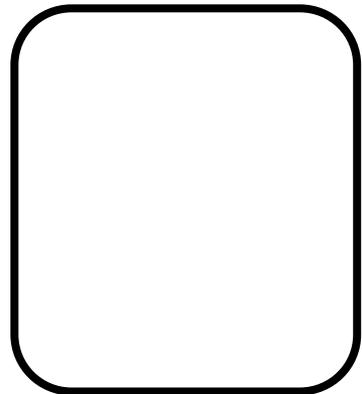
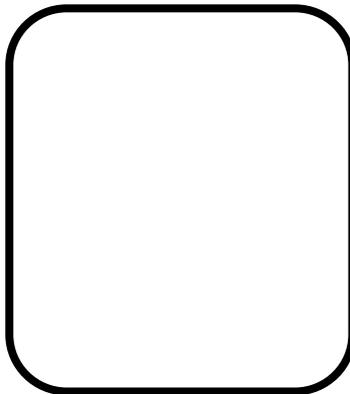
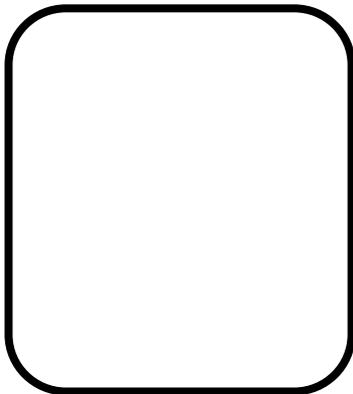
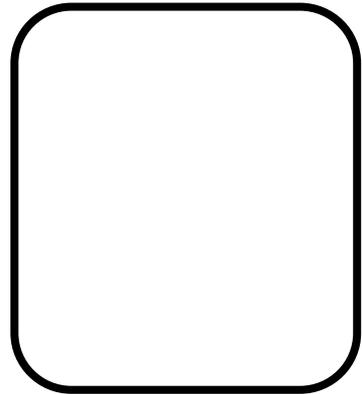
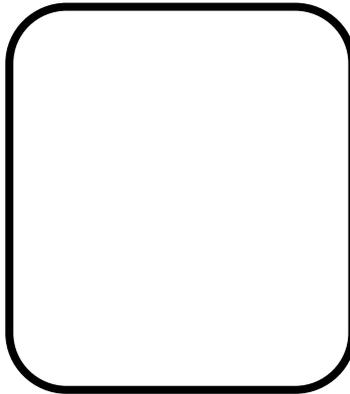
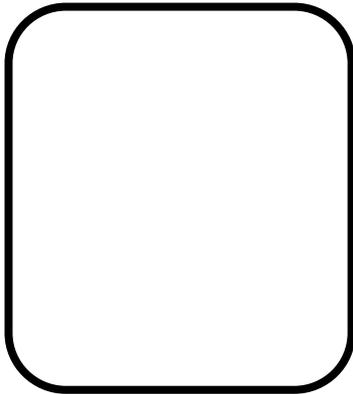
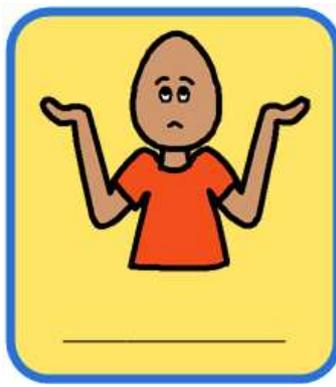
Label

Description of label

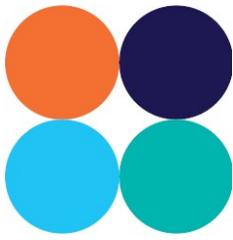
**Options**

What will be said to introduce each option:

	Options	Description of Option
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		




# Self-Reflections



# Self-Reflection: Modelling AAC

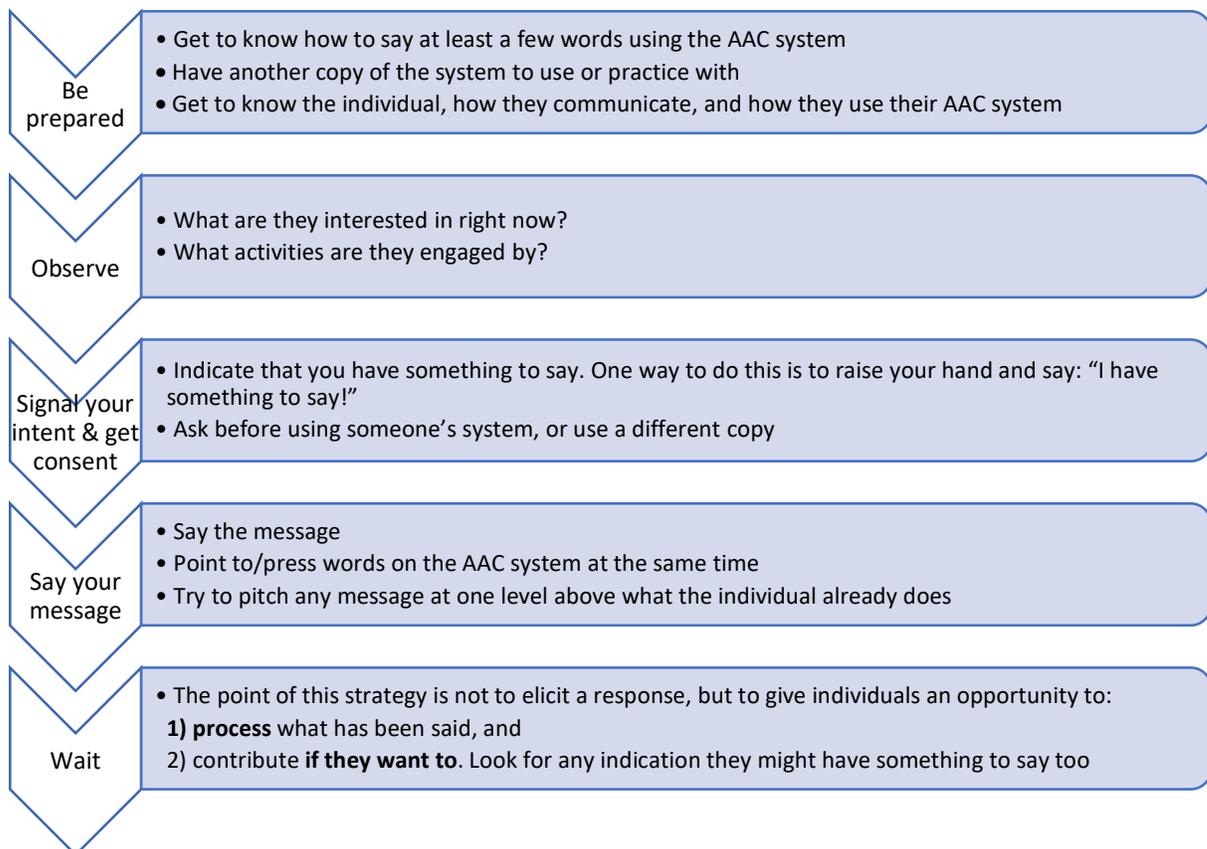
## Purpose:

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of the sub-skills that contribute to the overall skill of modelling with Augmentative and Alternative Communication strategies. It can act to guide personal goal setting and development as a communication partner. Place a mark under the number which reflects current performance in each area.

The reflection can be revisited regularly as part of personal or professional development. Some people may demonstrate different areas of strength.

If consent is provided, videos of an interaction with an individual is a good way to evaluate performance with each of the elements.

## Key steps of modelling:



**Get consent** before using a someone's aided communication system.  
**Respect** their right to refuse. **Do not assume** that a yes yesterday is a yes today.



## Reflection Recording Sheet: Modelling AAC

Person completing reflection \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Date 1 (x): \_\_\_\_\_

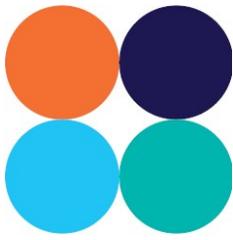
Date 2 (o): \_\_\_\_\_

Date 3 (/): \_\_\_\_\_

Skill	Never		Sometimes		Half the time		Usually		Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Know how where to find at least a few words										
Have a different copy to model on										
Know how the individual communicates										
Signals intent to communicate										
Gets consent to use someone else's system										
Talks and uses AAC strategy at the same time										
Adds to what the individual can already do. (at least a level above)										
WAIT...quietly										

### Ideas on how to improve:

Being prepared	Signal intent	Get consent	Using the AAC system	Wait
<input type="checkbox"/> Get a paper copy of a system (there are lots of options online) <input type="checkbox"/> Does the individual have a communication profile? Could I get help to start one?	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare own signal: - "I have something to say" - "I'm asking a question" - ...	<input type="checkbox"/> Was time given to provide consent? <input type="checkbox"/> Practice response to a negative with adults in front of the individual so they can see it is ok to say no	<input type="checkbox"/> Start by modelling a few words until confidence improves <input type="checkbox"/> Learn at least a few words a day or week <input type="checkbox"/> Using words that are relevant to the individual	<input type="checkbox"/> Silently count - (or another internal mantra that helps) <input type="checkbox"/> Use a personal, physical cue to wait - (clasping hands, take some deep breaths...)



# Self-Reflection: Verbal Referencing

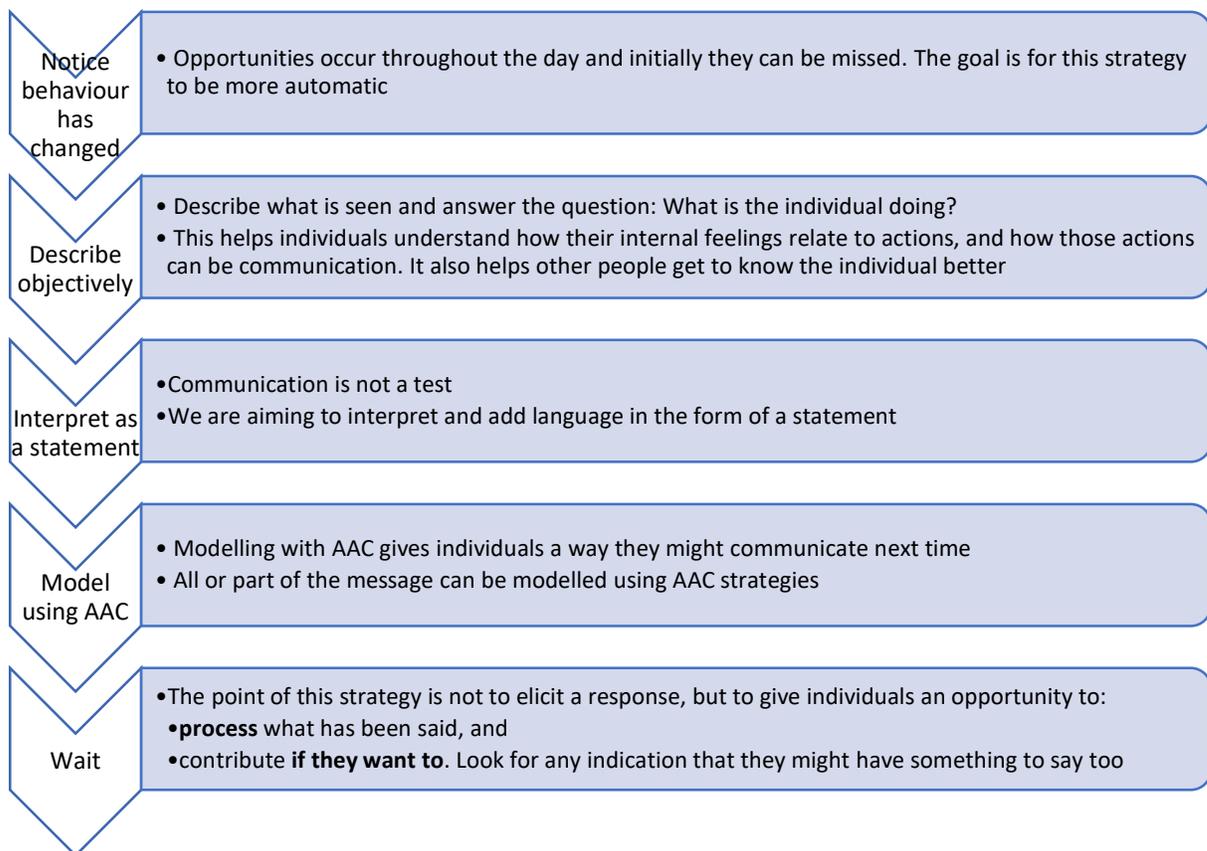
## Purpose:

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of the sub-skills that contribute to the overall skill of verbally referencing an individual's behaviour. It can act to guide personal goal setting and development as a communication partner. Place a mark under the number which reflects current performance in each area.

The reflection can be revisited regularly as part of personal or professional development. Some people may demonstrate different areas of strength.

If consent is provided, videos of an interaction with an individual is a good way to evaluate performance with each of the elements.

## Key steps of verbal referencing:



**Get consent** before using an individual's aided communication system.  
**Respect** their right to refuse. **Do not assume** that a yes yesterday is a yes today.



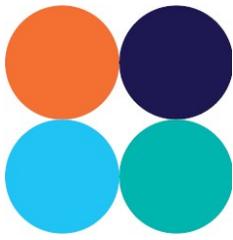
## Reflection Recording Sheet: Verbal Referencing

Person completing reflection \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date 1 (x): \_\_\_\_\_ Date 2 (o): \_\_\_\_\_ Date 3 (/): \_\_\_\_\_

Skill	Never		Sometimes		Half the time		Usually		Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOTICE opportunities to reference behaviour										
Describe behaviour OBJECTIVELY										
Interpret in the form of a STATEMENT										
MODEL using an AAC strategy										
WAIT...quietly										

### Ideas on how to improve:

Notice Opportunities	Describe objectively	Interpret as a statement	Model using AAC	Wait
<input type="checkbox"/> Look out for opportunities to reference an individual's behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Reference more initiation attempts They might: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look towards an object/person/activity</li> <li>- Change body positions</li> <li>- Attempt a sign, sound, word, or use aided communication</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan and practice ahead of time – especially around activities and behaviours they do regularly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E.g., A communication dictionary</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was that a description or assumption?</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Practice on pets/family	<input type="checkbox"/> Start with statement words like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "I think"</li> <li>- "I wonder"</li> <li>- "Maybe"</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was there any pressure to respond to what was just said?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn some key signs to use <input type="checkbox"/> Get another copy of a someone's aided system (or at least part of it) to model on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Electronic or non-electronic</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Start by modelling a few words until confidence improves	<input type="checkbox"/> Silently count <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (or another internal mantra that helps)</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Use a personal, physical cue to wait <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (clasping hands, take some deep breaths...)</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Use video to help know wait time provided



# Self-Reflection: Offering Choices

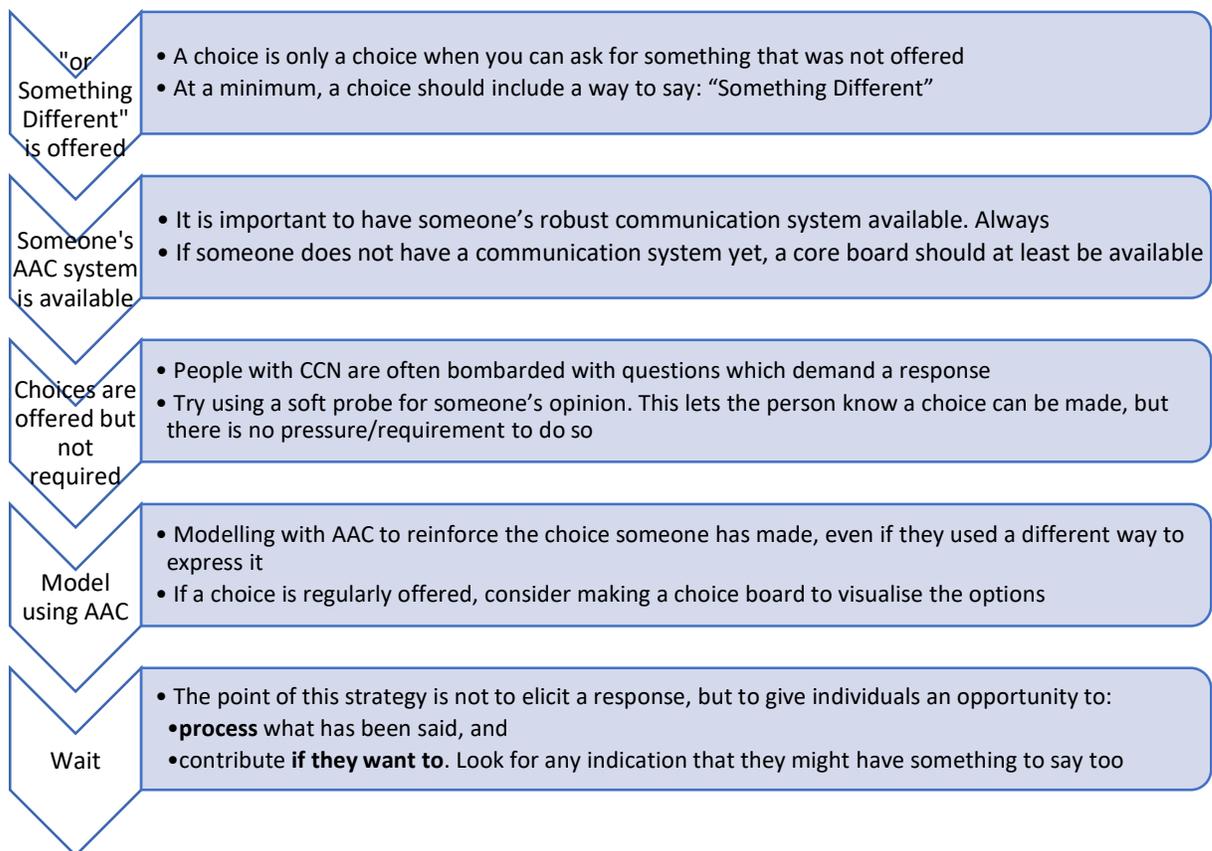
## Purpose:

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of the sub-skills that contribute to the overall skill of effectively offering choices to someone with a complex communication need (CCN). It can act to guide personal goal setting and development as a communication partner. Place a mark under the number which reflects current performance in each area.

The reflection can be revisited regularly as part of personal or professional development. Some people may demonstrate different areas of strength.

If you have their consent, videoing yourself during an interaction with an individual is a good way to evaluate how you are going with each of the elements.

## Key elements of offering choices:



**Get consent** before using an individual's aided communication system.  
**Respect** their right to refuse. **Do not assume** that a 'yes' yesterday is a 'yes' today



## Reflection Recording Sheet: Offering Choices

Person completing reflection \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Date 1 (x): \_\_\_\_\_

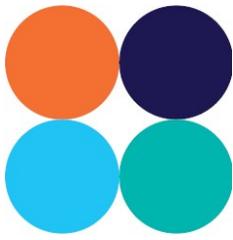
Date 2 (o): \_\_\_\_\_

Date 3 (/): \_\_\_\_\_

Skill	Never		Sometimes		Half the time		Usually		Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOMETHING DIFFERENT is offered as an option										
Someone's AAC system is AVAILABLE when a choice is offered										
Choices are offered but NOT REQUIRED										
MODEL using an AAC strategy										
WAIT...quietly										

### Ideas on how to improve:

Something Different	AAC is available	Participation is optional	Model using AAC	Wait
<input type="checkbox"/> Look out for opportunities to reference an individual's behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Reference more initiation attempts. They might: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look towards an object/person/activity</li> <li>- Change body positions</li> <li>- Attempt a sign, sound, word, or use aided communication</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly check AAC is in reach <input type="checkbox"/> Consider modifications to increase portability	<input type="checkbox"/> Start with statement words like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "I think"</li> <li>- "I wonder"</li> <li>- "Maybe"</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was there any pressure to respond to what was just said?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn some key signs to use <input type="checkbox"/> Get another copy of a someone's aided system (or at least part of it) to model on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Electronic or non-electronic</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce the choices someone has made	<input type="checkbox"/> Silently count <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (or another internal mantra that helps)</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Use a personal, physical cue to wait <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (clasping hands, take some deep breaths...)</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Use video to help know wait time provided



# Self-Reflection: Partner Assisted Scanning

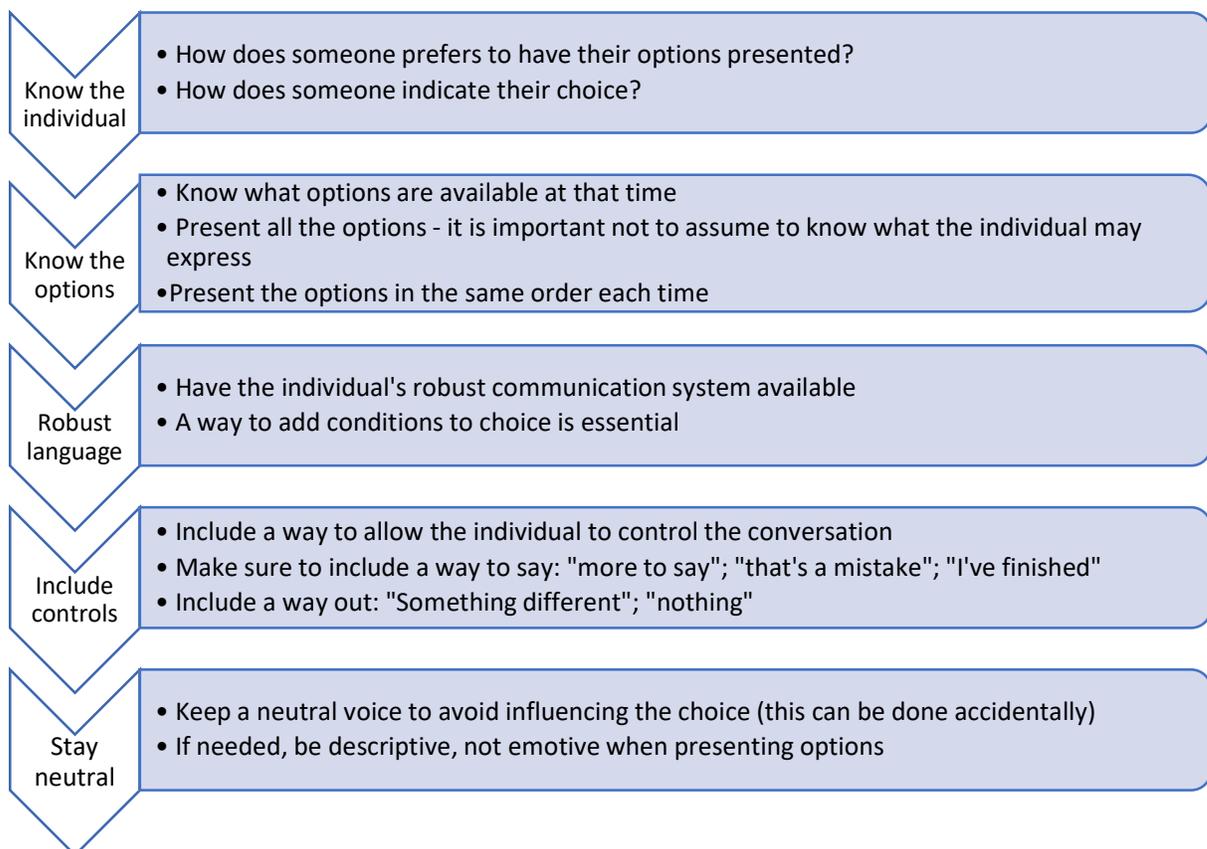
## Purpose:

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of the sub-skills that contribute to the overall skill of effectively using partner assisted scanning with someone with a complex communication need (CCN). It can act to guide personal goal setting and development as a communication partner. Place a mark under the number which reflects current performance in each area.

The reflection can be revisited regularly as part of personal or professional development. Some people may demonstrate different areas of strength.

If you have their consent, videoing yourself during an interaction with an individual is a good way to evaluate how you are going with each of the elements.

## Key elements of using a descriptive approach:



**Get consent** before using an individual's aided communication system.  
**Respect** their right to refuse. **Do not assume** that a yes yesterday is a yes today.



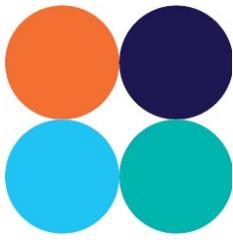
## Reflection Recording Sheet: Partner Assisted Scanning

Person completing reflection \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date 1 (x): \_\_\_\_\_ Date 2 (o): \_\_\_\_\_ Date 3 (/): \_\_\_\_\_

Skill	Never		Sometimes		Half the time		Usually		Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Know how the individual prefers to have options listed										
Know how the individual indicates their choice										
The options are known ahead of time										
All the options are presented										
The options are presented in the same order										
Individual's communication system is available										
There is a way to say: I have more to say										
There is a way to say: That's a mistake										
There is a way to say: I've finished										
There is a way to say: Something different										
There is a way to say: Nothing, or None										

### Ideas on how to improve:

- Use a communication dictionary
- Practice a neutral voice – practice including a downward or neutral inflection at the end of the option to ensure it is a statement rather than a question
- Practice saying only the essentials – helps to avoid auditory clutter until after the individual has indicated they have finished



# Self-Reflection: Descriptive Teaching

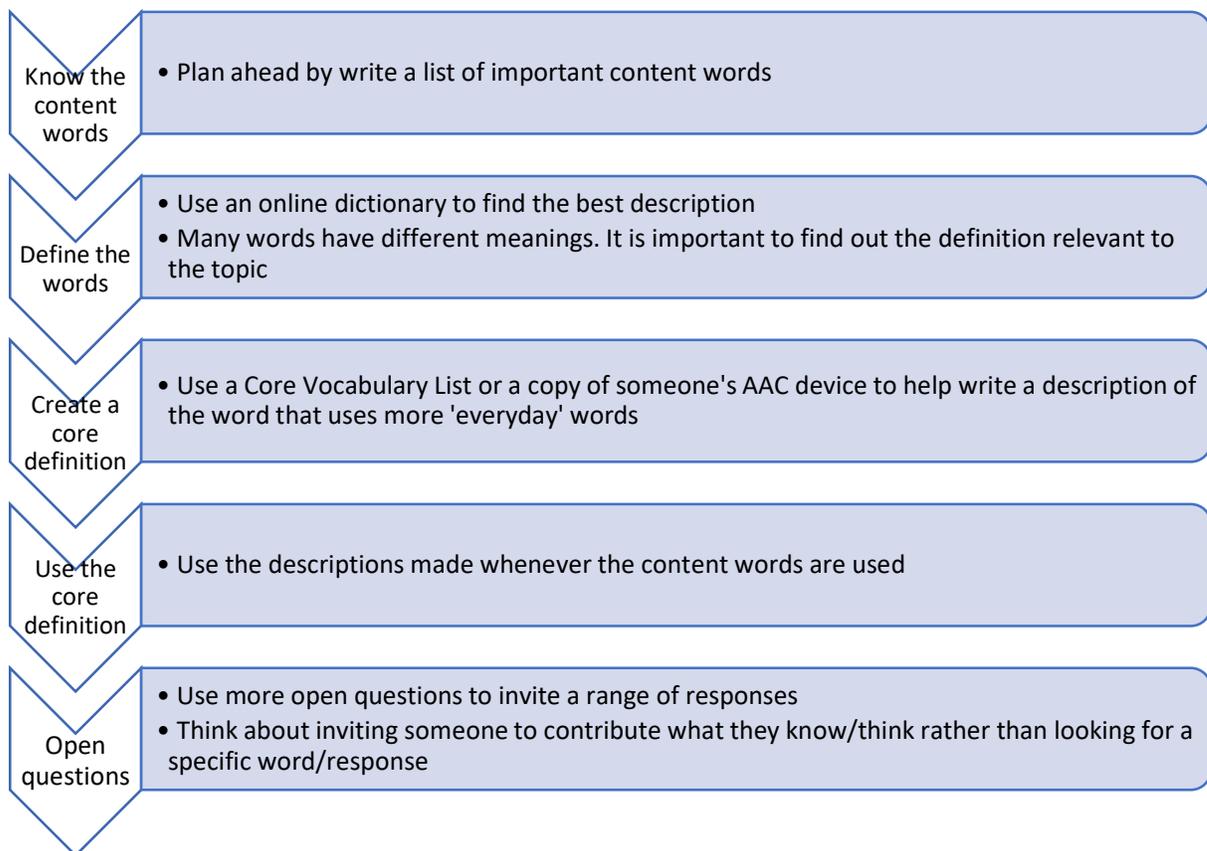
## Purpose:

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of the sub-skills that contribute to the overall skill of effectively using a descriptive approach with someone with a complex communication need (CCN). It can act to guide personal goal setting and development as a communication partner. Place a mark under the number which reflects current performance in each area.

The reflection can be revisited regularly as part of personal or professional development. Some people may demonstrate different areas of strength.

If you have their consent, videoing yourself during an interaction with an individual is a good way to evaluate how you are going with each of the elements.

## Key elements of using a descriptive approach:



**Get consent** before using an individual's aided communication system.  
**Respect** their right to refuse. **Do not assume** that a yes yesterday is a yes today



## Reflection Recording Sheet: Descriptive Teaching

Person completing reflection \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Date 1 (x): \_\_\_\_\_

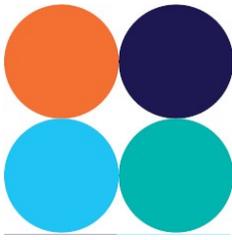
Date 2 (o): \_\_\_\_\_

Date 3 (/): \_\_\_\_\_

Skill	Never		Sometimes		Half the time		Usually		Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Know the content words										
Find the best definition										
Write a new definition using 'everyday' words										
Use the new definition alongside the content words										
Use an open approach if asking questions										

### Ideas on how to improve:

Know the content words	Find the best definition	Write a new definition using 'everyday' words	Use the new definition alongside the content words	Use an open approach if asking questions
<input type="checkbox"/> Use any documents associated with the topic to find the key words <input type="checkbox"/> Make a list first <input type="checkbox"/> Add to the list over time <input type="checkbox"/> Share the list with others to create a new dictionary	<input type="checkbox"/> Use an online dictionary <input type="checkbox"/> Write the definition with the content words <input type="checkbox"/> Use an electronic format to make this process quicker	<input type="checkbox"/> Find and use a core vocabulary list <input type="checkbox"/> Reword the dictionary definition – sometimes it just needs a slight tweaking <input type="checkbox"/> Get help from other people	<input type="checkbox"/> Print or have the list available when discussing the topic for quick reference <input type="checkbox"/> Share with others so they can use the same descriptions	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask questions that could have more than one answer <input type="checkbox"/> Plan questions ahead of time <input type="checkbox"/> Rethink goals to look less at 'labelling' and more at 'describing', 'predicting'



# Self-Reflection: Talking Mats

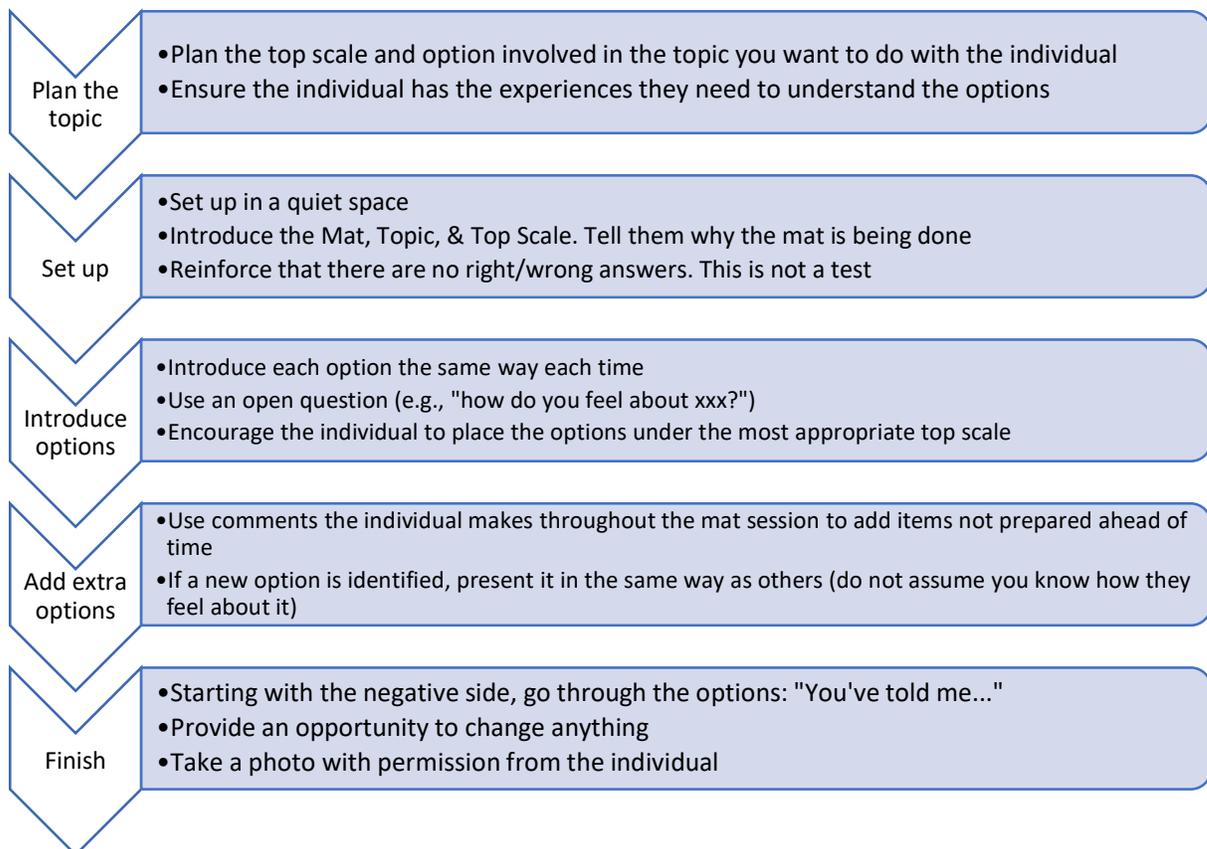
## Purpose:

This sheet is designed to establish a snapshot of the sub-skills that contribute to the overall skill of facilitating a Talking Mats session. It can act to guide personal goal setting and development as a communication partner. Place a mark under the number which reflects current performance in each area.

The reflection can be revisited regularly as part of personal or professional development. Some people may demonstrate different areas of strength.

If consent is provided, videos of an interaction with an individual is a good way to evaluate performance with each of the elements.

## Key steps of Talking Mats:



**Get consent** before using a student's aided communication system.  
**Respect** their right to refuse. **Do not assume** that a 'yes' yesterday is a 'yes' today.



## Reflection Recording Sheet: Talking Mats

Person completing reflection \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date 1 (x): \_\_\_\_\_ Date 2 (o): \_\_\_\_\_ Date 3 (/): \_\_\_\_\_

Skill	Never		Sometimes		Half the time		Usually		Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Introduced the topic and the purpose										
Explained the top scale										
Kept the top scale the same										
Used a consistent, open question for each option										
Kept personal opinions quiet										
Referred to placement on the mat objectively										
Waited in silence to give thinking time										
Reviewed/summarised the mat, negative to positive										
Gave opportunities to move options										
Gave opportunities to add options to the mat										

### Ideas on how to improve:

Two things that went well	Two things to change for next time

# Visual Supports

## Topic

## Planning Meetings

### Descriptive planning

Use these words to help teach the key concepts of this topic. They can also be used by individuals to express their understanding of a concept.

Instead of looking for the key concepts in their communication devices, individuals can use words they already know and are used in lots of other contexts.

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Accommodation</b> A room, group of rooms, or building in which someone may live or stay	Where I live My home Where I stay
<b>Actions</b> The process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim	Things to do Things I will do Things other people will do
<b>Apprenticeship</b> Learning a trade from a skilled employer, having agreed to work for a fixed period at low wages	Working and learning about a job at the same time Learning from someone who does the work
<b>Assistance</b>	Help I want Help I need to do something
<b>Barrier</b> Something which prevents access	Something that can stop me doing the thing I want
<b>Challenge</b> Task or situation which tests someone's abilities	Something that might be hard for me to do Without help, this thing could be hard
<b>Coordination</b> Organising different elements to enable them to work together effectively	Work together to get things done
<b>Dream</b> Ambition, ideal, possibility of doing something	Things I want to do Things I see myself doing
<b>Education</b> Information about or training in a subject Receiving systematic instruction	Know more about things
<b>Employment</b> Having paid work	Work I do for money

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Enjoyment</b> A thing that gives pleasure	I like it I like doing it
<b>Enthusiasm</b> Intense and eager enjoyment and interest	I like it a lot I like to think about it
<b>Fear</b> Feeling of anxiety about an outcome. Unpleasant emotion caused by threat of danger, pain, or harm	Something I don't like can happen Something I think can happen
<b>Fulfilment</b> Satisfaction or happiness as a result of achieving something	I like it when I finish this I feel good when I do this
<b>Goal</b> The aim or desired result	Things I want to do
<b>Group home</b>	Live with others
<b>Hobbies</b> An activity done regularly during leisure time	Something I do for fun I do it lots
<b>Identity</b> Who a person is The characteristics that define a person	Who I am
<b>Important</b> Of great significance or value	I care about it Someone cares about it
<b>Improved</b> Having become or been made better	Better now More good now
<b>Interests</b> The feeling of wanting to know or learn about something Something one enjoys doing or studying	Something I like to do Something I like talking about Something I like knowing more about
<b>Living Arrangements</b>	Who I live with Who comes to my home
<b>Obstacle</b> A thing that blocks, prevents, or hinders progress	Something that can stop me doing the thing I want

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Plan</b> Proposal for doing or achieving something	How I am going to do something Things that need to happen to do what I want.
<b>Positive</b> A desirable or constructive quality or attribute	Something that is good I like what has happened
<b>Possible</b> Able to be done or achieved	Something that can happen It is able to be done
<b>Qualities</b> Attribute or characteristic of someone or something	I am this Something I am
<b>Relationship</b> The way in which two or more people or things are connected	Who I am to someone Who someone is to me
<b>Skills</b> The ability to do something well	Something I am good at I can do it
<b>Social</b> Relating to activities in which people meet each other for pleasure	Things I like Things I do with other people
<b>Success</b> The accomplishment of an aim or purpose	When I do the thing I want to do
<b>Supports</b> Give assistance	Something that helps me do what I want Someone who helps me
<b>TAFE</b> Technical and Further Education, a system of tertiary education offering courses mainly in technical and vocational subjects	A place you learn about jobs before you do them You can learn about things you like E.g., Electrician, Carer, Nurse, Education Assistant, Accountant, Hairdresser, Builder, Musician,
<b>University</b> A high-level educational institution in which students study for degrees and academic research is done	A place to learn about lots of different things You can learn about jobs before you do them You can learn about things you like Learning from a teacher E.g., Teacher, Doctor, Engineer, Nurse, Physiotherapist, Pharmacist

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Volunteering</b> To work without being paid	Work I do for no money
<b>Work / Job</b> A place or time where one is being paid Tasks to be undertaken Effort	Somewhere I go Things I do for money

**Topic**

**Protective Behaviours**

## Descriptive planning

Use these words to help teach the key concepts of this topic. They can also be used by individuals to express their understanding of a concept.

Instead of looking for the key concepts in their communication devices, individuals can use words they already know and are used in lots of other contexts.

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Abuse</b> treat with cruelty or violence, especially regularly or repeatedly	Not good / Bad Something bad he/she did again and again Something he/she said I feel hurt Someone did bad things to me Someone knew it was bad (not an accident)
<b>Accident</b> unplanned or not expected to happen	I did not plan it I did not expect it They did not know I did not know
<b>Appropriate</b>	Something that is ok for here/now That is ok here/now That is good for here/now
<b>Assertive</b>	I say what I think They can understand me They know what I think I can explain
<b>Body signals</b> Body reacting to feelings	I feel in me You cannot see it What is going on in my body
<b>Bribe</b>	Someone gave to me, but it is bad They want me to do something
<b>Comfortable</b>	I like it This feels good I know what is going on
<b>Confused</b>	I do not know what to do

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Danger / Dangerous</b>	Something bad Need to stop I can be hurt
<b>Early Warning Signs</b>	I can see or feel it Helps me know what is going on
<b>Emotional</b>	Something in me You can't see it I feel it
<b>External</b>	Not in me On the outside You can see it
<b>Feeling</b> reactions in our body	How I feel What is in me Sometimes he/she can see how I feel
<b>Inappropriate</b>	That is not for now That is not ok for here
<b>Injured</b>	I am hurt here They hurt me I need help
<b>Internal</b>	In me You cannot see it
<b>Invisible</b>	Something you cannot see I cannot see it
<b>Mental</b>	Something I think You cannot see it
<b>Network</b> a group or system of interconnected people or things.	People I know who can help me I know them They help me
<b>Personal space</b>	Around me Being close to me

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Physical</b>	You can see it Something we do
<b>Police officer</b>	They are here to help They can be good They can be someone I do not know
<b>Positive</b>	Something that is good
<b>Private</b> For our own use	Just for me I do not want to show you now Not for everyone to know They do not see Something I do at home
<b>Protect</b>	So that I do not get hurt This is good Stop me being hurt
<b>Public</b> Something done, perceived, or existing in open view	They can see All can see
<b>Relationships</b>	I know them Can be different later It can change
<b>Respect</b>	I feel safe They are good with me They think I am good
<b>Safe</b>	I feel good Feel good I can ask for help I can tell them what happened
<b>Safe Strategies</b>	I can say Stop that I do not want you to do that I can go I can say No I need help

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<b>Secret</b> something that is kept or meant to be kept unknown or unseen by others	Something I know that you do not know You do not know it I know something and do not say
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	Touching me when I do not say yes Making me touch them when I do not want to. Talking to me about things I do not want to listen to Showing me things, I do not want to see
<b>Stranger</b>	Someone I do not know I have not seen them
<b>Threat</b>	They say I need to do/say something Make me do something Make me think I will get hurt
<b>Touch</b>	Feel on my___ They touched me They touched me on... Not ok / is ok
<b>Trust</b>	Somebody I think will do good Somebody who will help me
<b>Unsafe</b>	This is not good I do not feel safe

**Topic**

**Emergencies**

## Descriptive planning

Use these words to help teach the key concepts of this topic. They can also be used by individuals to express their understanding of a concept.

Instead of looking for the key concepts in their communication devices, individuals can use words they already know and are used in lots of other contexts.

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>The process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim</p>	<p>Things to do</p> <p>Things I will do</p> <p>Things other people will do</p>
<p><b>Accident</b></p> <p>an incident that happens unexpectedly and unintentionally, typically resulting in damage or injury</p>	<p>Someone is hurt</p>
<p><b>Actions during an emergency</b></p>	<p>Go</p> <p>Help</p> <p>Tell / Say something</p> <p>Listen</p> <p>Be calm</p> <p>Do it fast</p>
<p><b>Assistance</b></p> <p>the action of helping someone</p>	<p>Help for me</p> <p>Help for someone</p> <p>Help I need to do something</p>
<p><b>Emergency</b></p> <p>A serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action</p>	<p>Not safe</p> <p>Someone needs help now</p> <p>No time to wait</p>
<p><b>Emergency assembly point</b></p> <p>Safe locations for employees and visitors to assemble in times of emergency evacuation</p>	<p>Safe place to go</p> <p>Wait</p> <p>Everyone goes</p>
<p><b>Evacuation</b></p> <p>Remove (someone) from a place of danger to a safer place</p>	<p>Go from not safe place</p> <p>Go out to a safe place</p>

Key Concept Words + Definition	Core Vocabulary Description
<p><b>Fear</b> Feeling of anxiety about an outcome. Unpleasant emotion caused by threat of danger, pain, or harm</p>	<p>Something I don't like can happen Something I think can happen</p>
<p><b>Important</b> Of great significance or value</p>	<p>Something I need to know about Someone cares about it</p>
<p><b>Induction</b> Formal introduction of someone to a new job, position, or organisation</p>	<p>Learn New work Know where I can get help</p>
<p><b>Plan</b> Proposal for doing or achieving something</p>	<p>How I am going to do something Things that need to happen to do something.</p>
<p><b>Possible</b> Able to be done or achieved</p>	<p>Something that can happen It is able to be done</p>
<p><b>Skills</b> The ability to do something well</p>	<p>Something I can do Something you can do</p>
<p><b>Supervisor</b> A person who supervises a person or an activity Observes and directs the execution of (a task or activity)</p>	<p>Gives work to do Someone who can help me at work</p>