

Communication chart



Having the power to communicate & make decisions is central to people having choice & control in their lives. Everyone communicates, but not everyone uses words.

This is an essential tool to use when people don't communicate with words. Everyone who is dependent on others for support has an especially critical need to have his or her communication understood

It is also important to use when the ways that people communicate with their behavior are clearer than the words that they use, or when what people say and what they mean are different. In my experience, many people could benefit from a communication chart.

- The communication charts are simple & powerful ways to describe how someone communicates with their behavior, body language, gestures & facial expressions
- There are 2 communication charts, 1 describes how the person communicates with us, the other is how we communicate to the person
- They not only share what we think the person is communicating, but how we need to respond

What it does

It helps us to focus on what someone is trying to communicate, whether they use words or not. It is easy to assume that someone doesn't have much to say if they rarely speak, but it isn't the case. This person-centered thinking tool helps us to find other ways of communicating well together.

How it helps

It ensures that people are understood. This is so important, especially for people who rely on others for support. Having the power to communicate and be understood is central to people having choice and control in their life.

How to Develop a Communication Chart:

- Include the date of when the communication chart was developed & when you are going to review & update it
- Include relevant information into the individual support plan
- Where people are unsure or disagree, think about how you can check out the information, for example, using information from Nucleus/learning logs etc
- Be as clear & specific as possible – co-workers should know exactly how they need to respond or how to communicate with the person
- Make sure you have a way for everyone who is involved in the person's life to see & use the communication chart(s)
- Look at the person's relationship circle to decide who to involve in developing their communication chart(s). On the **HOW I COMMUNICATE WITH YOU CHART** - To describe how the person communicates with us, start with the 2nd or 3rd column first
 - **When This Happens** (this section describes the behavior – what other people can see or hear).

- ***We think it means*** (this section describes what we think the behavior means. What the person may be thinking or feeling)
- ***At this time*** (this section describes the context, what is happening in the environment or what has just happened – the trigger)
- ***We need to do this*** (this section describes what others should do or not do in response)
- The second communication chart **How you communicate with me**, is used where people use alternative ways to communicate, for example objects of reference
 - Under the column **We Want to Tell**: eg we may write We want to tell if a person is feeling comfortable while sitting up in a wheelchair
 - The second column **To Do this we**: eg we may write, To do this we try placing a pillow next to the individual and watch for facial cues or body language
 - The third column **Helped/Supported by**: eg we may write the individual was helped/supported by using the green, fluffy pillow on the left side
 - The bottom column **What Do We need to do next**: eg you may write that you want to try a few other pillow options, so you have some spares