

How to use a communication board

Communication boards use pictures/icons and text to identify key information, locations and questions. They can help people who communicate differently to understand each other and get their needs met. This includes:



People who cannot talk out loud, or become non-verbal when overwhelmed



People who use languages other than English



People who have speech that is difficult for others to understand



People working at the airport

1. Introduce yourself

If someone has a communication difference, and you don't understand their message – offer to use the communication board.

Ask:

"Do you need help? How can I help?"

2. Choose the right board

Show the picture board and word board.

Say:

"I'm having difficulty understanding you. Would you like to use a board? Which one would you like to use?"

3. Use the communication board

Place the communication board on a stable surface in front of the person so they can easily see it and reach it.

If the person cannot use the communication board, you may need to ask someone who knows the person well to assist.

When the person **can** point independently

1. Ask the person to point to what the person wants to say
2. Check you understood the message, e.g. "Are you asking about ...?"
3. Look for Yes or No response or refer to the person to the Yes and No symbols on the communication board

When the person **cannot** point independently

1. Ask the person to show you how they say Yes and No
2. Say: "I will point to each message." Say "Yes" when it is the message that you want
3. Point to one picture at a time, along each row, and read each message aloud
4. When the person indicates Yes, confirm that you have understood the message