

COMMUNICATION WORKS BOTH WAYS

COMPETENCIES: COMMUNICATIONS



INTRODUCTION

There is a common misconception that because a person with autism can speak, they don't need support in communication. Some people with autism don't speak to communicate, and therefore it's easier to assume that they require more support in communication. In fact, people on the spectrum communicate in many ways.

At times, it may be challenging for someone who speaks to verbalize in stressful situations. Using alternative forms of communication may be key to interacting successfully with the world whether a person is speaking or non-speaking. Some people with autism may use a variety of communication methods within the same conversation, for example speaking while also using a tablet or pictures. No matter the method, the goal is effective communication.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

- Vocal Speech
- Texting
- Communication Devices
- Tablets or Smart Phones
- Letter or Choice Boards
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

FACTORS WITH CAN AFFECT COMMUNICATION

- Sensory or Environmental Variables
- Emotions or Tone of Situations
- Social Variables
- Anxiety
- Sleep or Fatigue

FLEXIBILITY

- A person with autism may use one or more models of communication and switch between them.
- As long as he is getting his point across, it is just fine! We need to be flexible too.

ADJUSTING YOUR COMMUNICATION

- Communicate purposefully and be aware of making too much small talk.
- Include people you support in every interaction they should be included in.
- Use clear, concrete language.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW!

- 1** Observe someone you support and spend time with him to learn about his strengths, interests and needs.
- 2** Ask her what she likes and what she is good at. Find out how she would like to improve at or learn something new and presume competence.
- 3** Read reports or support plans, ask family members and other staff about strengths, and needs of someone you support.
- 4** Discover the times when she seems happy or peaceful and note her activities at the time.



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