**Communication Approaches**

Communication can be defined as ‘the way we impart or exchange information by speaking, writing or using some other medium’. This can encompass verbal communication (spoken words), our tone of voice and non-verbal cues (facial expressions, body language etc.) as well as the use of sign language, Makaton, gestures and visual resources. It is important to communicate with the young person using their preferred method of communication and making your interactions simple and easy to understand.

During periods of heightened distress or dysregulation, it may be more difficult for your child to process and comprehend verbal communication and so it may be helpful to consider other strategies and methods of communication, to support them with understanding and retaining of information.

General communication strategies that are developmentally appropriate should be used to support your child’s understanding of important information and routines; theyshould also be provided with opportunities to communicate their needs and wants adaptively wherever possible.

**Practical Ideas/Strategies**

* Limit language when speaking to your child, focussing on key words to deliver the message.
* Reinforce any information visually, using photographs or symbols wherever possible.
* Use “now” and “next” approach to communication, which will allow your child to understand the immediate and following activity in their day – this is especially useful when communicating routines or making requests of your child, as well as supporting transitions.
* Be mindful of the impact of your own emotional state, body language and tone of voice when communicating directly with the child or young person.
* Consider devising a keyring of key visuals, for easy access during periods of heightened arousal or when leaving the house
* Ensure that the young person is allowed adequate time to process any information offered to them, as well as the opportunity to reciprocate this information
* Be calm in your approach – remember your tone of voice during verbal interactions

**Online Resources / Videos**

<https://www.essexice.co.uk/> - For further information regarding communication resources

[Inclusive Communication Essex (ICE) - SNAP Charity](https://www.snapcharity.org/business-directory/4094/inclusive-communication-essex-ice/#:~:text=Inclusive%20Communication%20Essex%20%28ICE%29%20is%20part%20of%20the,use%20a%20variety%20of%20different%20forms%20of%20communication.) - Inclusive Communication Essex (ICE) offers training and a specialist resources loan service to families and carers of adults with learning disabilities who have additional communication needs.

<https://youtu.be/IyV1v-nib38> - Communicating with people who have a Learning Disability

<https://youtu.be/EHH7ohQ0aTQ> - Communication tips - why are visuals so important?

**Links for Other “How To” Guides / Strategies**

* Intensive Interaction PBS Guide:

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* Motivators Worksheet:



* Helpful visuals (free to use):

