

Disability Resource Hub Disclaimer

The material on the Disability Resource Hub is for reference only. No claim or representation is made or warranty given, express or implied, in relation to any of the material. You use the material entirely at your own risk.

The material is provided as point-in-time reference documents. FACS does not maintain the material and does not undertake to ensure that it is accurate, current, suitable or complete.

Where conditions and warranties implied by law cannot be excluded, FACS limits its liability where it is entitled to do so. Otherwise, FACS is not liable for any loss or damage (including consequential loss or damage) to any person, however caused (including for negligence), which may arise directly or indirectly from the material or the use of such material.

Building a communication profile

Use these prompts/questions to build a snapshot of the person's communication

How does the person communicate with others?

Speech? Words? Phrases? Sentences? Does the person ever say things just to please others? If so, how do you know when this is happening and how can you support them to say what they really think/feel/want?

Signing system? Makaton? Auslan? Signed English? Their own versions of makaton/Auslan/signed English? What signs should ALL staff know? Where can they find this information? Picture Symbols; Compic, Boardmaker, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)? What symbols does the person need with them ALL the time? What are the best ways to support the person to use their picture symbols?

Photographs: Where are these photos? Do any photos/magazine pictures work or do they need to be photos of the exact thing/person that the person knows? What are the best ways to support the person to use photos?

Electronic devices; Dynavox, LightWriter, other? What support does the person need to use this device; assistance with charging, maintenance, spelling? What is the back up if the device breaks down?

Gestures: If the person uses gestures (not clear sign language), what are the main ones that any new person and ALL regular staff need to know about? (there can be more detailed information captured in communication charts).

Behaviour: How does the person use their behaviour to communicate? What main things do new people and ALL staff need to know about in order to recognize behaviour as communication? (there can be more detailed information captured in communication charts).

Other: using object symbols or real objects, vocalizations, eye pointing, facilitated communication. What do people need to know and do to support the person to communicate this way? If people who are unfamiliar with the person can't understand them as well as friends, family or regular carers, what tips would help others understand the person or make themselves understood to the person?

Is the person from a non English speaking background? If so, what language(s) does the person speak? What languages do they understand? What do you need to be aware of in relation to communication in that person's culture generally? Does the person need an interpreter? What basic words in the person's language should ALL staff know? Where can they find this information? Do you need to learn more about the person's culture?

How do people know if the person is: happy, sad, angry, sick, in pain, content, anxious/scared/nervous, confused?

Does the person understand all/most of what other people say to them? If this would not be obvious to people meeting the person for the first time, you may need to specify this in the profile e.g. Tom understands everything you say even though he may not react.

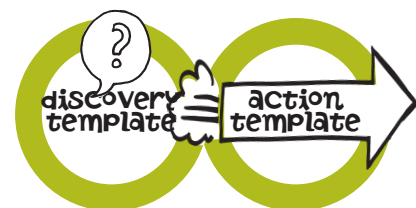
What sorts of information does the person understand? e.g. simple conversations, short, simple sentences and instructions? What helps the person to understand? What makes it more difficult for the person to understand?

Does the person need you to use signs, gestures, pictures or object symbols to help them understand? What help does the person need to stay focused on an activity or task?

Making choices

How does the person indicate yes and no? Does yes always mean yes? Does no always mean no? When does this vary? e.g. does the person ever say yes or no to please/impress others? Does the person ever say yes or no by mistake if they are rushed, confused or if there are too many options? What are the best ways to support the person to make choices? (there should be more detail in the decision making profile).

How does the person ask for something or indicate that they don't want something that's being offered?



What things does the person enjoy communicating about?

What are the best ways to support the person with this? e.g. looking slowly through photo albums, exploring items in an object reference box one by one.

Are there things that the person does NOT want to talk about or becomes upset if these topics are raised? If yes, what do people need to know and do to support the person with this? Some topics may be upsetting, yet still necessary to discuss. If this is the case, how should people approach this with the person?

What are the best ways to help the person understand what others are 'saying' to them?

What should others do to support the person if they become aware of these things – especially, pain, fear, anger, sickness, confusion? (there should be more detail about this in communication charts).

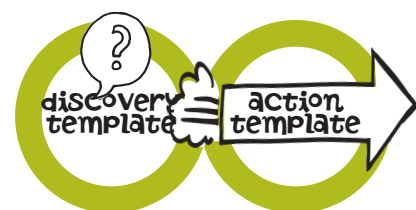
How do people know when the person likes or dislikes something? (you can use learning logs to learn more if you're unsure right now).

Any other things to be aware of? e.g. does the person have any trouble with their hearing or eyesight? What do people need to be aware of in relation to this?

e.g. ensure there's not too much background noise, get the person's attention before talking to them. Make sure that you place any written information or pictures within arm's length of the person so they can see it.

What are the best ways to help the person to meet new people at home or in their community?

Actions



How does the person communicate with others?

How do people know if the person is: happy, sad, angry, sick, in pain, content, anxious/scared/nervous, confused?

Making choices

What things does the person enjoy communicating about?

What are the best ways to help the person understand what others are "saying" to them?

Any other things to be aware of?

What are the best ways to help the person to meet new people at home or in their community?

tips

- 1 Does everyone agree on this information? If not, can you use learning logs to test out different ideas? Would a referral to a speech pathologist help?
- 2 This document needs to be updated regularly/ should change with the person. The communication profile should be kept with the person, rather than in a file, to help any new people in the person's life.
- 3 If some information is not appropriate to have on a public profile, you may need to create a private version that is just for regular staff.
- 4 Include photos if you can.

discovery
template

action
template

How does the person communicate with others?

Beth does not use words to communicate, although she did speak and learn some sign language in the past.

Beth understands most things people say, especially simple sentences and instructions BUT, she has very limited hearing (she has had operations and has damage) – always show Beth what you are talking about eg show her a glass for a drink, point to things.

How do people know if the person is: happy, sad, angry, sick, in pain, content, anxious/scared/nervous, confused?

If Beth is in a bad mood, it is highly likely that she is sick or coming down with something – what should people do?

When Beth is enjoying something or looking forward to something, she has a big smile on her face and may rock gently back and forth in her chair.

When she is excited, she may flap her hands in front of her face. When she does this for longer or more intensely, she may be anxious or confused.



Making choices

Beth is used to being able to fade into the background and going with the flow, so you need to actively encourage Beth to make choices and you need to pay close attention to what she's communicating eg Roster/Photo board... you may need to show Beth your photo and then stick it on the board and take her to the board to show her the change of photos at the end of the shift.

What things does the person enjoy communicating about?

Beth follows routines very closely and this is often how she knows what is happening next throughout her day or during an activity eg when out for lunch with her, when she's had her cup of tea and been to the toilet, she knows it's time to go. When something happens that doesn't fit with the routine, Beth can become anxious – reassure her about what's happening.



What are the best ways to help the person understand what others are "saying" to them?

If Beth has understood and wants what you are offering, or wants to do what you're asking, she will respond almost immediately.

As far as we know, Beth hasn't used picture based systems, but you could try any ideas you have.

Any other things to be aware of?

Beth understands most things people say, especially simple instructions.

Beth needs prompts with simple steps.

To get Beth to choose, show her two things and ask her to choose between the two.

What are the best ways to help the person to meet new people at home or in their community?

tips

- 1 Does everyone agree on this information? If not, can you use learning logs to test out different ideas? Would a referral to a speech pathologist help?
- 2 This document needs to be updated regularly/ should change with the person. The communication profile should be kept with the person, rather than in a file, to help any new people in the person's life.
- 3 If some information is not appropriate to have on a public profile, you may need to create a private version that is just for regular staff.
- 4 Include photos if you can.

discovery template

action template