

Communication Strategies

The following techniques may be useful for individuals whose language may be difficult to understand. These techniques enhance the understandability of your speech by providing your communication partner some extra cues:

- Ensure there are no distractions in the room to help your partner concentrate on what they are trying to say, and what you are saying to them. Ensure you have their full attention before starting to say something
- Provide your communication partner context for what you are saying. Knowing the topic of conversation makes a big difference in understanding - try writing the topic of your message to ensure they are following
- Use simple sentences. Use only simple, grammatically predictable sentences rather than longer more complicated sentences.
- Accompany speech with simple gestures when appropriate. At times, speech may be supplemented by simple gestures. For example the palm extended in a halting motion, may accompany the message, "stop" or hand in 'c' shape bring to lips meaning "drink"
- Take advantage of situational cues. Your surroundings may help you give a listener extra cues. For example, you might point to objects in the room in order to introduce a topic/get them to understand what you are talking about
- Make the environment a "friendly" as possible. Some communication environments are more difficult than others. Avoid carrying out important conversations in noisy places or in places where your communication partner cannot watch you as you speak.
- Use 'closed' yes/no questions to help you establish what they are trying to tell you and the topic of their conversation
- Try to speak in a calm voice and not get frustrated when you cannot understand
- Use written words, picture and real objects to try and both explain what you are saying and to help you understanding what they are saying

Read our 'Find other support for 'communication' info sheet to find other local and national support organisations.

