

# AADI SAARTHAK TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION

## **WE ALL WANT TO BE UNDERSTOOD:**

- ✚ We all want to share our needs, feelings, thoughts and experiences
- ✚ This makes us complete and also helps other people to get know us better
- ✚ When people understand us and acknowledge us we feel good about ourselves

## **WE ALL WANT TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE:**

- ✚ We also like to know other people's needs, feelings, thoughts and experiences
- ✚ When we understand their needs, thoughts, feelings and experiences, we are able to know them
- ✚ This makes them feel good and it also helps feel good about ourselves

## **WE ALL HAVE OUR OWN WAY OF COMMUNICATING:**

- ✚ We all use different ways of communication
- ✚ We all change the way we communicate and what we communicate about with different people
- ✚ We use different methods of expressing ourselves like gestures, body language, facial expression, behaviours, acting, pictures, signs, alphabets/words and speech.
- ✚ Everyone has their own preference of the way they want to express themselves

## **ALL PEOPLE CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES:**

- ✚ All people can express themselves to varying degrees. We need to learn to understand them.
- ✚ People with disability also use different methods of communication and they may be more comfortable with one or the other way of communication

- ✚ It is always possible to learn to communicate with person you are supporting, do not be impatient. Ask for support from the person if you cannot understand them, he/ she will be happy to help

## **WHAT COMES THE WAY OF COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY?**

- ✚ We and our attitudes come in the way when communicating with persons with disability
- ✚ We speak before we listen
- ✚ We assume what is going to be said and complete the sentence
- ✚ We are not interested
- ✚ We do not have the time
- ✚ We think that the person cannot communicate



- ✚ We do not put in the effort to match our way of communicating with that of the person we are communicating with
- ✚ We think that the person has nothing interesting or important to tell us
- ✚ We think we do not have the skills to communicate with the person
- ✚ We assume that the person cannot communicate if they have a different way of communicating than what we are used to
- ✚ When we do all this to the person, we undermine him/ her



## HOW TO GATHER WHAT A PERSON IS EXPRESSING AND UNDERSTAND THEM?

- ✚ Create time, be available and sensitive to pick up any information that the person with disability may want to share whatever means of sharing he/ she may use
- ✚ Introduce yourself if the person does not know you
- ✚ Seek permission to communicate with
- ✚ Ask what method of communication would the person you are supporting will like to use. Seek the help of someone who already knows them to have an initial understanding of the method
- ✚ Position yourself comfortably so that the person can see easily and ensure that there is light for them to see your lip movement and gestures when you communicate



- ✚ Do not assume that the person wants to make eye to eye contact or wants you to sit or stand close to them



- ✚ Do not touch the person you are supporting without their permission, if he/ she has permitted you to touch to communicate, do not startle the person by quick sudden movements or touch
- ✚ When you meet person initially, observe how he/ she expresses through the body movement, breath, muscle tightness and position of head and eyes
- ✚ Do not get shocked or disturbed if people repeat what you say, smile inappropriately, look as if they have not heard you, show no response or start showing sudden repetitive movements, all these could be normal responses for some people especially when they meet a new person
- ✚ Speak slowly in response to people

- ✚ Give people time to respond
- ✚ Confirm what you hear
- ✚ Be honest and requesting the person to repeat what they have expressed if you have not understood it rather than pretending to have understood
- ✚ If the person you are supporting is getting upset that you are not able to understand what he/ she is saying, request them not to lose their patience, say that it may take time for you to learn initially but you do want to understand him/ her
- ✚ Some people use a picture board to point out pictures of objects or feelings or actions. Some others may use a picture board to point out letters to make a word. Picture board is a good and easy way to express oneself. It is used by people when they know what they want to say but cannot use speech to express themselves. If the person you are supporting uses a picture board, request the family or the supporting organization to help you learn how to use the picture board
- ✚ Some people use gestures or movement of hands, eyes, facial muscles to express choices, decisions, emotions, etc. Each person may have learned gestures that work well for them. Observe the person you are supporting while they interact with the people who already know them. Show interest in what they are expressing. Look out for signs of approval or comfort when you do understand what they are expressing.
- ✚ Some times the person may not use elaborate gestures but may use tactile signs. Through touch they can explain what they want to express. The person may vary the type of touch or the force with which they apply the touch. They may also use a finger to write a word on the palm. If the person you support uses tactile signs to express himself/ herself ask his/ her family to help you learn these skills or request the supporting organization to help you
- ✚ Sometimes people only respond to questions and choices that you put to them. It is important to learn to use what is called closed questions. Closed questions are questions which have limited and specific answers. When one asks a series of closed



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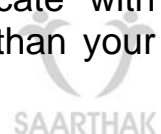
to which the person with disability has to give a short one word answer, one can build a picture of what the person is trying to express.

## **HOW TO EXPRESS YOURSELF THAT THE PERSONS WHO YOU ARE SUPPORTING CAN UNDERSTAND YOU?**

- ✚ Understand the preferences and abilities of the person who you are supporting and adjust accordingly
- ✚ Create time
- ✚ Make sure that there is not too much noise and enough light when you communicate
- ✚ Listen first do not only speak
- ✚ Challenge your judgments about the person's abilities to understand you and your own ability to communicate with people whose method of communication is different than your method
- ✚ Use short sentences, simple words, with the right emphasis
- ✚ Say one idea at a time
- ✚ Use key word communication if required, this means only say the main words that convey the meaning of what you are saying rather than using adjectives and verbs
- ✚ Clarify with the person, when you think that the person may not have understood
- ✚ Say what you are feeling about a situation openly but be polite in doing so. If you are feeling bad or angry, say, "I am feeling angry." You do not have to blame the person for how you are feeling.
- ✚ If you want to find out about something general about the person you are supporting, especially when you want to know



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their views or opinion or experiences, then you can use open ended questions. Open ended questions do not have the answer rolled into the question, the person can answer these questions in what ever manner they want and these continue the conversation forward. Guide the person if they find your question confusing

✚ Use closed questions (questions with specific answers) where necessary

✚ Use two choice questions to determine choices, sometimes when you need to help the person decide what they want or how they want it, you can use two choice questions. Give the person to choices, present them one at a time. So that the person can choose one of things by expressing yes or no in what ever way they want to. In all two choice situations always be ready for the fact that the person may say no to both the choices and may want another choice beyond what you have suggested.










✚ Remember the need and methods of communication used by people may change over time



✚ Please also resource material which has pictures and descriptions of some alternative and augmented communications tools.

WHEN YOU COMMUNICATE DO NOT

-  Do not generalise
-  Do not use Always or Never
-  Do not blame the person for their difficulties
-  Do not show impatience or intolerance
-  Do not talk to adults as if they are children
-  Do not Name Call
-  Do not use more than one question at the same time

