

# Supporting Conversation and Communication

These tips can be useful when talking to someone who has a communication difficulty:

## Understanding:

- Ensure the environment is quiet and non-distracting where able.
- Use key words and short simple sentences.
- Break down instructions into single steps and allow time to respond.
- Write down key words or provide pictures/objects.
- Avoid using abstract/complex language.
- Take turns to communicate (group situation - encourage one person to speak at one time).
- Keep conversations context bound e.g. talk about the 'here & now' or about topics of shared knowledge e.g. look at photographs / magazines / newspapers together.

## Expression

- Ask closed questions which require a yes / no response (nodding /shaking head or thumbs up/down if unable to speak)
- Observe their facial expression, body language and tone of voice.
- Support their ability to make choices by writing down options or provide pictures/objects to choose from.
- Offer pen / paper to write or draw if able

- Positively reinforce attempts to communicate.

If frustrated, do not try to push or make too many attempts to guess what is trying to be said.

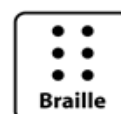
Each person may be **different** and as a result, some of the above strategies may work more effectively than others.

You may have found some additional strategies which work well for you and your conversation partner.

**For further advice, contact the Speech & Language Therapy department on 0151 529 4986**

## Further Information:

- Head Injury: [www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk)
- Stroke: [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)
- Dementia: [www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org) and/or [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)



## If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

**Tel No: 0151 529 2906**

**Email: [interpretationandtranslation@aintree.nhs.uk](mailto:interpretationandtranslation@aintree.nhs.uk)**