

Strategies to Use When Communicating With a Person Who Uses Augmentative Communication

Some of the rules for having a conversation change when we are speaking with someone who uses augmentative or alternative communication (AAC).

Here are some guidelines to consider:

- Speak respectfully to the person who is using AAC. Use a natural tone, volume, and rate.
- Ask the person to show you how they communicate “yes” and “no”.
- Ask the person if they have a communication display or device.
- Ask if you can get the display or device out of their bag.
- Ask the person to demonstrate use of the display or device.
- Ask the person to demonstrate their signal that they have something to communicate.
- Give the person the opportunity and time to communicate.
- Repeat the message back to the person to ensure that you have understood the intended message.
- Put the message into a sentence and ask for confirmation.
- Focus on what the person communicates, not just on how they communicate.

Reference:

Collier, B.M. (2000). *Communicating Matters: A training guide for personal attendants working with consumers who have enhanced communication needs*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

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