

# Communication Dictionary

- A meeting to discuss and compile a final draft should then be held. Managers must be present. (This is likely to take a minimum of a full morning or afternoon).

## Part 2 - Receptive

The second part of the dictionary is where we talk about how we tell the person things.

There are 3 columns rather than 2 in this section. The first column describes what we are trying to tell the person.

The second column describes how we tell the person at the moment. The third column gives you a chance to tell us what you think would be the best way to tell the person so that he can understand most easily.

WHAT WE ARE TELLING JANE?	WHAT I DO/SAY TO GET MY MESSAGE ACROSS?	WHAT WOULD BE THE IDEAL WAY TO GET MY MESSAGE ACROSS.
It's time to go to bed.	Tell Jane using speech. She also might pick up on the time of day.	Tell Jane using speech, show her a picture of her bed and give her night-dress to her.

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## PART 1 EXPRESSION

Please fill in as much of the communication dictionary as possible, working with the person it is for, where you can. Think about speech, vocalisations, sign language, facial expressions, whole body movements, gestures, use of objects, position of head, legs and feet etc.

How does Pete tell you when he is:

YES	
DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES	AND WE SHOULD
Pete nods his head and may vocalise, e.g.: 'mmmuh.' Pete will co-operate with whatever you've asked.	Act on this and respond appropriately. Mirror back the 'yes' by saying it yourself and by nodding your head.
NO	
DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES	AND WE SHOULD
Pete shakes his head and sometimes says 'mmuh', the tone of this vocalisation sounds like 'no', although the tone may vary. Pete may push an object away, he may resist physical prompts. He also turns his head or body away and puts his hand across his chest. If you persist, there is a possibility Pete may hit out.	If you are unsure, repeat whatever you said as Pete will sometimes say no almost automatically. Talk to him about what you are doing, explain, use encouragement and patience, and take your time. Try to understand how Pete is feeling and the reasons why he might have said no. Respect Pete's wishes when it's a realistic choice, bear in mind that gentle persuasion will sometimes help. If Pete is resistant, try walking away and come back in a few minutes and ask again. Sometimes this helps.



Communication Dictionary  
developed by Alison Matthews, Oldham Learning Disability Services

# Communication Dictionary

## WANTS TO BE ALONE/ WANTS SOME SPACE

### DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES

Pete tends to say 'mmuhh' in a 'no' tone. Now and then he will wave to you as if to say 'goodbye'. He might flap his hands dismissively and won't respond. He could turn away and avoid looking at you. If he wants to be alone when he's in the bath he might throw a flannel at you. If he wants to be alone in bed he may wave to say goodbye. He may lift his head up and look at you as if to say 'why are you still here?' As you leave the room, he will look at the light to indicate for you to turn it off.

If you are in the living room he may choose to sit away from you.

### AND WE SHOULD

Respect the fact that Pete wants some time on his own, bearing in mind his safety. Give him some space and quiet time. This can be a short-lived episode. You may need to sit elsewhere or go into the kitchen for a while. Be aware that Pete may just have had enough of the current activity, it depends on the context. (See section on bored.)

## LIKES SOMEONE

### DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES

If Pete likes someone he tends to touch them, point to them and to the seat next to him as if to invite them to sit down. If Pete is feeling well he is more socially confident, he will interact more.

## DOESN'T LIKE SOMEONE

### DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES

Pete may be reluctant to co-operate and may ignore the person or occasion. This can be more to do with his preference.

## DOESN'T WANT TO SEE FRIENDS/FAMILY

### DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES

Pete will make the 'mmuh' sound (with a 'no' tone) and may turn away. He will be less co-operative.

### AND WE SHOULD

Show Pete the photo board and explain to him, outline what will be happening and remind him of the positives. If he is adamant he doesn't want to go respect his wishes.

## WANTS TO LISTEN TO MUSIC

### DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES

Sometimes Pete points to the hi-fi in the house or the radio in the car. Pete enjoys music.

### AND WE SHOULD

Pete enjoys you singing and clapping. Try putting the Mozart CD on when Pete is snoozing.

## DOES NOT WANT TO LISTEN TO MUSIC

### DESCRIPTION OF WHAT PETE DOES

Pete may point to the TV to indicate 'I don't want to listen to the radio'. Pete would be sleepy or not engage with you. If music is too loud, Pete may want to leave a venue.

### AND WE SHOULD

Be sensitive to the time of day, Pete may not appreciate loud music in the car late at night or first thing in the morning.

