

Working with People with Complex Communication Needs

Who has complex communication needs?

People who experience:

- Difficulty expressing themselves verbally, due to a variety of communicative disorders
- Anxiety in socially interacting with others, causing difficulty with the communication process
- Difficulty with comprehending what is being relayed to them

Ways to support people with complex communication needs

- Be patient with the communication process
- Respect the methods in which people choose to communicate
- Offer a wide array of ways people can communicate
- Learn about new technologies available for interaction
- Focus on people's abilities
- Ask people how to support them
- Provide reasonable accommodations to policies, procedures, and practices

Common mistakes made working with people with complex communication needs

- Making assumptions about people's level of independence
- Assuming incompetence rather than competence
- Denying access to communication techniques that work for them