

Making a Communication Access Card

A communication access card is a card you can prepare to tell people what they can do when communicating with you when you use their business or service.

Instructions:

- Keep your instructions short and simple.
- Tell people what to do when communicating with you.
- You should have additional instructions ready if there is a problem.
- For situations where communication is critical, you may need more details.
- It's okay to make different cards for different places. For example, you could have a card that just deal with conversations that you could use in a restaurant or store and a different card for a doctor's office where you might want to include instructions about needing more time to communicate at an appointment, assistance to take notes or instructions on contacting you by phone. You have different communication requirements in different places.
- Keep your communication instruction card in a place where you can easily show it to people.

Here are some ideas to consider telling people about how to communicate with you.

How you communicate. For example:

- "Yes" and "No"
- I want to say something
- This is how I use my display or device
- Please read my instructions
- Please take my device / board out of my bag
- This is what I do if I want to say something
- My speech may be unclear at times

What the person you are communicating to can do. For example:

- Read the word / letter I point to
- Sit / stand in front of me
- Give me time to finish my message

- Write down what I point to
- It's OK to ask me Yes and No questions
- Don't guess
- Repeat what you understand
- Tell me if you don't understand

How to be respectful. For example:

- Talk to me, not the person with me
- Speak in a normal tone and volume
- Give me opportunities to communicate
- Respect my privacy and decisions
- I can make my own decisions
- Please be patient

How to speak so that you can understand. For example:

- Speak in everyday language
- Speak slowly
- Speak clearly
- Please explain
- I need you to show me what you are talking about
- Please write down main words

How much time you need to communicate. For example:

- I need an extra 15- 30 minutes for our appointment
- It takes me longer to communicate my message

How you use a Communication Assistant. For example:

- My assistant will help you understand how I am communicating
- My assistant says only what I direct him / her to say
- I make my own decisions

How to get a Communication assistant when you need one. For Example:

- I need the organization to help me find and pay for someone to assist with communication

- Without a Communication Assistant I cannot communicate effectively and I do not have equal access to services

How to get reading materials in ways that you can understand and use. For example:

- I need a larger font
- I need a plain language version with no jargon
- I need an electronic copy
- I need you to read it to me
- Please explain it to me
- Please hold the paper

How to complete forms, take notes and sign documents. For Example:

- I use a stamp / an X / thumb print
- I need someone to assist me
- Please write that down
- Please email it to me
- Please write down what I communicate
- Please take notes for me

How to communicate with you over the phone. For example:

- I will use my device over the phone
- I prefer email or texting
- I prefer to use a relay service
- I will use an assistant over the phone

How to accommodate your communication at meetings. For example:

- Send me the agenda ahead of time
- I need time to make my messages
- Go on talking when I make my message
- Wait for me to communicate my message
- This is how I'll signal when I want to communicate something
- Summarize what has been said
- I will use an assistant at the meeting