



{inclusion outreach}

1031 Lucas Avenue

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Personal Communication Dictionaries

A Personal Communication Dictionary (PCD) is a tool to help team members consistently recognize, interpret, and respond to non-verbal communication by a student. The more consistently we respond to a student's communication, the more likely they are to continue communicating!

PCDs are made by recording what a student does, what the team believes that behaviour means, and how team members should respond.

Behaviours Observed "What I Do"	Intent/What it Means "What I'm Telling You"	How to Respond "What You can Say or Do"
What the student is doing, e.g.: Gestures Vocalizations Eye Gaze Facial Expressions Physical Tone Movement Patterns Symbols Vocalization Speech	Our "best guess" interpretation of meaning, e.g.: "I want more." "I don't like that." "I'm not feeling well." "I'm excited." It is helpful to work as a team when interpreting, as everyone has a different perspective, and communication can change in different settings (e.g. in PE a student may show excitement in a way that they don't in the classroom).	Use a 3-pronged response format: 1. Identify Behaviour: e.g., Student is sitting in their chair and you notice them closing their eyes. Say, "I see you closing your eyes." 2. Interpret: Remember what the team has agreed that this means, e.g., "I think you're telling me you don't want to do this anymore." 3. Respond: e.g., "Let's clean up and see what's next on the schedule."

Respect

Competence

Inclusion

Presence

Choice



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Sample Personal Communication Dictionary

_____’s Personal Communication Dictionary

Written by _____

Date: _____

Behaviours Observed “What I Do”	Intent/What it Means “What I’m Telling You”	How to Respond “What You can Say or Do”
		1. Identify Behaviour 2. Interpret 3. Respond
I’m looking away, or turning my head away.	I’m not interested in the activity.	1. “J, you’re looking away.” 2. “You’re telling me you don’t like ____.” 3. “Let’s see if there’s something else you like better.” <i>Offer me a choice of different activities.</i>
My head is up, I’m looking at someone; sometimes I make a short sound like “ah”.	I like that person or something about them today; I want to interact with that person.	1. “J, you’re looking at ____.” 2. “You’re telling me you might want to talk to him.” 3. “Let’s go say hi”. <i>Take me over to that person with my BIGmack so I can start a conversation.</i>
My finger or thumb are in my mouth, I make a low-pitched hum.	I’m unhappy, I want to be out of my wheelchair and left alone.	1. “J, your finger is in your mouth and you’re humming.” 2. “You want to get out of your chair and have some time on your own”. 3. <i>Help me transfer out of my chair and give me 15-20 minutes.</i> OR

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "J, your finger is in your mouth and you're humming." 2. "You're telling me you want to get out of your chair..." 3. "... but we need to finish this, and then it will be time for a break." <i>Remember to honour my request for a break.</i>
I make a loud, low-pitched vocalization, rocking in my chair, with an agitated expression.	I'm hungry, and I want to eat now.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "J, I can see your face and hear your voice being agitated." 2. "You're telling me you're hungry." 3. "I can help you get your lunch box." <i>Get me something to eat immediately.</i>
I stick out my tongue while drinking.	I don't want any more to drink.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "J, you're sticking your tongue out." 2. "I think you're saying you don't want any more to drink." 3. <i>Stop giving me a drink. If I haven't had much to drink, offer more later.</i>