Exploring Communication Options When Hospitalized

Tools for Life, Georgia’s Assistive Technology Act Program

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation

College of Design

April 2020
Introduction and Goals

• The Tools for Life team is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by collecting and vetting resources for individuals with disabilities in the community, as well as their family and circles of support.

• The resources in today's presentation are not meant to replace advice or instruction from a doctor or medical team. These resources are here to educate and empower. We encourage you to take this information, do further research, and share what you've learned with your medical and support teams.

• All presentations and resources are accessible and will be posted on the Tools for Life website www.gatfl.gatech.edu. We ask that you share this information with anyone that will benefit.

• We are in this together and together we are stronger. Stay safe and educated!
Your Presenters

DeeDee Bunn, MMSc., SLP
Speech Language Pathologist

Liz Persaud
Program and Outreach Manager
Contact Your Statewide AT Program

Visit AT3 Center

www.at3center.net/stateprogram
Factors Affecting Communication
Communication Affected By

- Trauma or decrease in health
- Unfamiliar environment
- Rapid Communication (not necessarily in their 1st language)
- Critical decisions are being made
- Some degree of pain or discomfort
- Hearing aids, dentures and glasses may not be with them
- Medications and/or sleep deprivation alter their “state”
- Sub-optimal position for communication
- Other?
Elements of AAC in Hospital Settings

Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) must be:

- Necessity
- Functional
- Easy to Access
- Easy to Use
- Easy to Acquire

Augmentative Communication Tools for the Medical Setting: Debby McBride, MS., CCC-SLP, Julia Pearson, MS, CCC-SLP
Communication Tools
Preparing for Temporary Communication Loss

• What if you are not able to communicate while you are hospitalized?
  • Create a plan
    • Support Team – who would be your support team while hospitalized?
    • Determine how you will communicate
      • Yes/No response – how will you respond?
      • Items/Vocabulary needed for communication
      • Method for support team and hospital staff to communicate with you
        • Yes/No questions
        • Communication Boards
        • Spelling Board
        • Pain scale/Body Parts
        • Partner Assisted Scanning
  • Written instructions for how to communicate with you
Who will be on your support team?

- Do they know what to do?
- Restrictions due to COVID-19
How Will You Communicate?

Look for a consistent way to respond

- Motor Response
- Yes/No Response
  - Eye Blinks
  - Head Nods/Shakes
  - Raise Hand/Finger
  - Other consistent movement
What Do You Need to Say?

- Medical Needs
- Personal Needs
- Personal Information
- Pain Scale
- Body Parts
- Spelling Board
Communication Board Design

Hospital Intensive Care Communication Board

**Hospital Intensive Care Communication Board**

---

**COMMUNICATION BOARD (ENGLISH)**

- Pain
- Tired
- Nauseous
- TV control
- Call light
- Lights
- Hot
- Cold
- Scared
- Lotion
- Glasses
- Medicine
- Itchy
- Dizzy
- OK
- Wash face
- Chapstick
- Blanket
- Reposition me
- Uncomfortable
- I need help
- Oral care
- Contact my family
- Talk to doctor
- Use the bathroom
- I am wet/soiled
- Check my catheter
- I have a question
- Family visit?
- What's happening?
- Contact respiratory
- Suction mouth
- Suction trach
- How much longer?
- How am I doing?
- What's next?

**YES**

**Not sure**

**NO**

**SPELL**

**Thank you**

**Ask me Yes/No questions**

---

**COMMUNICATION BOARD (ENGLISH)**

- Pain
- Tired
- Nauseous
- TV control
- Call light
- Lights
- Hot
- Cold
- Scared
- Lotion
- Glasses
- Medicine
- Itchy
- Dizzy
- OK
- Wash face
- Chapstick
- Blanket
- Reposition me
- Uncomfortable
- I need help
- Oral care
- Contact my family
- Talk to doctor
- Use the bathroom
- I am wet/soiled
- Check my catheter
- I have a question
- Family visit?
- What's happening?
- Contact respiratory
- Suction mouth
- Suction trach
- How much longer?
- How am I doing?
- What's next?

**YES**

**Not sure**

**NO**

**SPELL**

**Thank you**

**Ask me Yes/No questions**
Spelling Boards

Hospital Intensive Care Communication Board

Adult Medical Communication Board
Alternate Spelling Board Designs

Frequency & Numbers for Listener Mediated Scanning

A E I O U/Body/Pain Scale Book
Ways to Access Communication
Partner Assisted Scanning is a way for communication partners to help individuals who can’t communicate by pointing.

The communication partner will list or scan through possible choices on a communication board.

Generally the partner will point to or name groups, then rows and finally items within a row.

The individual will indicate their choice of group/row and then desired item by indicating with a yes/no, eye blink, raised finger, etc. when the desired row and item is named.
Partner Assisted Scanning Video

“Introducing Partner Assisted Scanning for Spelling”
Boston Children’s Hospital ALS Augmentative Communication Program

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8ZTfMqsfU
Partner Assisted Scanning Resource

Boston Children’s Hospital ALS Augmentative Communication program

This side should be used by the person who is communicating their eyes. You will need to print out the mirror image for the communication partner.

Cut out this central cream box.

Laminate the two pages together, back to back, ideally using matt laminate.
2-Step process to identify the desired letter or number

1\textsuperscript{st} – look at the square with the same border color as the letter or number that you want

- If you want the letter “M” which is orange, look at the square with the orange border first
- Your communication partner then knows you want an orange letter

2\textsuperscript{nd} look at the square that holds your desired letter

- “M” is in the middle square on the bottom row
- Your communication partner will track where your eyes are looking to find the desired square, then identify the orange letter

Step 1 – Color

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\text{d} & \text{e} & \text{f} \\
4 & 5 & 6 \\
\end{array} \]

Step 2 – Letter/Number

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\text{i} & \text{m} & \text{n} \\
\text{u} & \text{v} & \text{w} \\
\end{array} \]
Eye Gaze Board for Spelling - Front

Front (facing individual)

This side should be used by the person who is communicating their eyes. You will need to print out the mirror image for the communication partner.

Cut out this central cream box.
Laminate the two pages together, back to back, ideally using matt laminate.
Eye Gaze Board for Spelling - Back

Back (facing communication partner)

This mirror image side should be used by the person who is interpreting what is being communicated i.e. the communication partner.

You will also need to print out the page that is in alphabetical order for use by the person who is communicating with their eyes.

Cut out this central cream box. Laminate the two pages together, back to back, ideally using a matt laminate pouch.
Staff Instructions
Communication Board Instructions

Communication Instructions for Doctors, Nurses and Staff

• Provide a copy of instructions on your desired method of communication
  • Yes/No questions
  • Communication boards
  • Spelling Boards

• Describe how you need to access your communication
  • If you are not able to touch your boards:
    • Partner Assisted Scanning
    • Eye-gaze
Change the instructions to reflect what you need:

1. Tell the staff that this is a way for them to communicate with you while you are on a ventilator.

2. Review some of the messages on the board with the staff. Provide them with an example of how you use it. For example: If you want a blanket, you touch the word “blanket” on the board.

3. Show staff the messages and the spelling board. Tell them you will use the letters to spell what you want to say. This could be names of people or you may spell short phrases etc.

4. Leave the board close to you. Hand it to you when you are trying to communicate together. Encourage staff to use both the phrases and spelling board.
Communication Board Links

• **Adult Medical Communication Board** - Talk to Me Technologies: [https://www.talktometechnologies.com/pages/adult-medical-communication-boards-free-download](https://www.talktometechnologies.com/pages/adult-medical-communication-boards-free-download)

• **Hospital Intensive Care Unit Communication Resources** Tobii-DynaVox (available on the My Tobii-DynaVox website – you can sign up for free): [https://www.mytobiidynavox.com/Support/COVID-19-Downloads](https://www.mytobiidynavox.com/Support/COVID-19-Downloads)

• **Frequency and Numbers for Listener Mediated Scanning** ACE Center: [https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/frequency-numbers-listener-mediated-scanning/](https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/frequency-numbers-listener-mediated-scanning/)

• **AEIOU/Body/Pain Scale Book** Boston Children’s Hospital ALS Augmentative Communication Program: [https://www.bridges-canada.com/collections/widgit-health/products/9318-1](https://www.bridges-canada.com/collections/widgit-health/products/9318-1)
• **Medical Communication Board** Bridges-Canada: [https://www.bridges-canada.com/collections/widgit-health/products/9318-1](https://www.bridges-canada.com/collections/widgit-health/products/9318-1) ($20/pack of 10)


• **Encoded Colored Borders E – Tran** ACE Center: [https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/encoded-coloured-borders-e-tran/](https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/encoded-coloured-borders-e-tran/)
COVID-19 Resources for People with Disabilities
