

# Why use visual supports to enhance communication skills?

## 1. Visual learning is a strength for most autistic children and young people.

Visual supports help children and young people learn the process and power of communication. They also help with social cognition which is also important in being an effective communicator. Evidence suggests that the use of visual supports paired with language acts as a springboard for the development of speech and language acquisition.

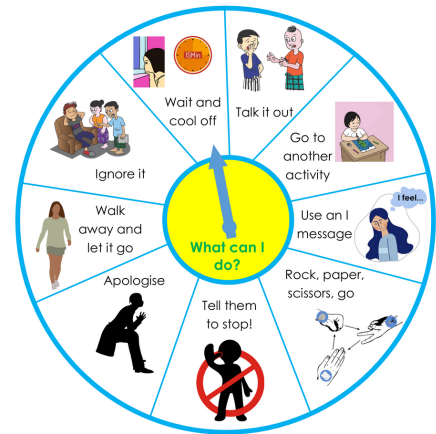
## 2. Visual supports are consistent.

We can say the same thing in lots of different ways e.g. "Get dressed", "put your clothes on", "get changed". This can be confusing. Language is transient; words disappear once they are spoken. Visual supports are consistent and can be referred to when needed. Visual supports therefore, provide clarity and consistency.



**get dressed**

## My Problem Solving Wheel



## 3. Visual supports increase understanding.

As explained before, language is transient. If the young person hasn't processed and understood the language immediately, it may be lost or forgotten.

Visual supports allow for longer processing times as the child or young person can continue looking at them until they are processed and understood.

## 4. Visual supports reduce anxiety.

Life is unpredictable. Visual supports help children and young people to know what is happening in a day and provide a platform for teaching flexible thinking concepts such as change, surprise, and transition.

When a lot of verbal language is used in giving direction or when there is already heightened anxiety the child or young person can feel overwhelmed and anxious. Visual supports reduce this anxiety as less verbal language is required.

## 5. Visual supports increase independence.

Visual supports can be moved according to what the child or young person is doing or where they are going, this helps them to generalise learning without being overly reliance on adult support.

Visual supports need to be tailored to the level of learning, which can be determined through assessment.