

## Communication Checklist

Autism			
Getting Their Attention	Yes	No	Comments
I use their name at the beginning so that they know I am talking to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I use their special interest, or the activity they are currently doing, to engage them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Making Yourself Understood	Yes	No	Comments
I keep questions short and speak slowly, as autistic people can struggle to filter info	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I use specific key words, repeating and stressing them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I pause between words to give the person time to process what I have said and to respond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
When possible, I use visual supports such as pictures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I try to avoid noisy or crowded environments that reduce how much they can process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I ask specific questions, for example, asking 'Did you enjoy science class?' instead of 'How was your day?'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Making Yourself Understood	Yes	No	Comments
I limit open-ended questions, and instead structure questions in a way that gives options or choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I avoid using irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions, idioms, or exaggeration, as these are often taken literally by autistic persons. If I do use these, I am clear about what they mean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reducing Anxiety	Yes	No	Comments
I give them plenty of notice before we change from one activity to another	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To help prevent sensory overload and anxiety, I turn down lights and noise when possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not stare or hold eye contact for a prolonged period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I use less non-verbal communication, such as eye contact or gestures, when someone is anxious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not comment on the 'stims' (repetitive physical actions) of an autistic person or ask them to stop, unless they are unsafe. Stimming is often self-soothing and a response to anxiety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Hearing Disability	Yes	No	Comments
I attract the person's attention before speaking. This can be done by gently touching the person on the shoulder or by waving my hand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I look at and speak directly to the person, not their interpreter if they have one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If I am speaking to someone using a sign language interpreter, I pause occasionally to allow the interpreter time to translate completely and accurately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I speak normally, without exaggerating my words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
When speaking, I do not put my hands in front of my face or chew gum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I am prepared to repeat myself, as only a third of speech is understandable through lip reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If I am leaving the presence of someone with a visual disability, I let them know that I am leaving and whether I will be returning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not omit phrases like 'nice to see you'. These are part of normal conversations and visually impaired persons understand this.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Intellectual Disability	Yes	No	Comments
I use plain language and avoid jargon or difficult words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I use short, simple sentences to avoid overloading them with information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I speak slowly and repeat verbal information multiple times if needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I use concrete language rather than abstract language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I listen carefully and work with the person to provide info in a way that will suit their needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If I do not understand someone, I do not pretend to have; instead I ask the person to repeat themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I use helpful non-verbal communication such as gestures and images	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Physical Disability	Yes	No	Comments
I speak directly to the person, not to an accompanying attendant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I consider an assistive device as an extension of the person's personal space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I speak slowly and repeat verbal information multiple times if needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I use concrete language rather than abstract language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
When possible, I sit down when having a conversation with a wheelchair user	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I remove obstacles for clear passage to where we will be sitting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I shake hands when introduced to a person with a disability, recognizing that many people with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb do shake hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not say 'I am sorry', 'What caused you to be in a wheelchair?', or 'How fast can you go?'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Speech Disability	Yes	No	Comments
If I have not understood, I ask the person to repeat themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Whenever possible, I ask questions that can be answered with a "yes" or a "no"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I avoid speaking excessively slowly or loudly; such adjustments are not necessary for most persons with speech-related disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I allow for silence to give the individual time to respond to a question. The person may simply need time rather than further explanation of the question.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I avoid making remarks such as "slow down". This will not be helpful and may be interpreted as demeaning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I wait for the person to finish before I respond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Visual Disability	Yes	No	Comments
I identify myself when I approach the person and I speak directly to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not touch them without permission unless it is an emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
When guiding a visually impaired person, I offer my arm instead of grabbing theirs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I am specific when offering directions, such as "left about 5 feet"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I recognize that guide dogs for visually impaired persons are working and should not be distracted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If I am leaving the presence of someone with a visual disability, I let them know that I am leaving and whether I will be returning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not omit phrases like 'nice to see you'. These are part of normal conversations and visually impaired persons understand this.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	