

Personal Communication Dictionary (PCD)
OR
Personal Gesture Dictionary (PGD)

A personal communication dictionary is a document that helps to outline the ways in which an individual communicates. This is important for people who don't communicate using methods such as speech, writing or symbols. For people who have complex communication needs it is important that their communication partners recognise and understand their communication behaviours. A communication or gesture dictionary can help to ensure that all staff are aware of the individual's communication behaviours and agree on how to respond. It assists primary communication partners to respond in a predictable manner to the individual so that an individual's communication method is being understood and responded to appropriately.

To create a personal communication dictionary, people who know an individual well need to observe and describe the person's behaviours, determine what these behaviours mean and then agree on an appropriate response.

For example:

Kate's Personal Communication Dictionary		
Written by David, Jane, John		
January 2008		
What I do...	What it might mean...	What you should do...
Pull my jumper over my head.	I'm feeling calm and peaceful.	Leave me alone.
Wave my hands.	I'm feeling anxious.	Comfort me and try to remove cause of anxiety (it may be too noisy).
Reach out with both hands.	I'd like to go for a walk.	Take me out for a walk to the park. Take me out into the garden.

Personal communication dictionaries need to be regularly reviewed and updated as an individual's communication behaviours can change. They also need to have the person's name, date it was created and by whom somewhere on the document.

(Name)'s
Personal Communication Dictionary

(Date)

What I do...	What it might mean...	What you should do...