



Ways of Communicating if You or Your Friend Do Not Speak

Augmentative communication is a way of communicating for people who do not use speech. “Augumentative” means something added. There are different kinds of augmentative communication.

- One person might use pictures that they can point to on a board.
- Another person might use a board with words of things and people they often want to speak about.
- Someone who can spell might use a board with the whole alphabet.
- Some people use a computer to help them speak.
- When Rebecca is painting, she uses a light beam on a band on her forehead. She can point the light to the colour she wants by moving her head. Rebecca’s friend holds the paint brush and follows the light as Rebecca points it at the page.

It is important for friends of the person who uses augmentative or alternative communication (ACC) to know how they communicate. If you use this method, ask someone who knows you to help you explain it to new friends.

You or your family or friends may want to look at the Augmentative Communication Community Partnerships website if you have difficulty with speaking. It has many good suggestions for how to communicate without speech.

To learn more, visit: <http://www.cdacanada.com/>

Below are a few suggestions from this website. They are for a friend who wants to learn how to communicate with you:

- Make eye contact.
- Speak directly to the person using augmentative communication, not to the person who may be accompanying them.
- Use everyday language.
- Do not speak loudly, slowly or in a condescending manner.



- Ask the person to show you how he/she communicates “Yes.”
- Ask the person to show you how he/she communicates “No.”
- Ask the person to show you how he/she communicates with the augmentative system that he or she uses.
- Give the person time to communicate. Using such a system takes more time than speaking.
- Do not feel you have to keep talking. It takes time to construct a message using this system. Try to feel comfortable with the silences.
- If you are short on time and cannot communicate with the person , be honest and make an appointment when you do have the time.

If the person is using a display board:

- Say each word selected out loud so that the user knows you have the correct word.
- Do not interrupt when the user is in the middle of conveying a message.
- If you are not sure when the user is finished ask him/ her "Are you finished?"
- Say the words in the order that the user gave them.
- Suggest what s/he might mean using all the words.
- Try again if you are wrong the first time.