



Empowering Connections through Effective Communication

Communication Spotlight



A committee striving to improve communication!

Person Directed Supports, Inc. (PDSI) established a committee to better support individuals with communication needs. The committee serves and represents various counties across Pennsylvania. The committee meets monthly and their work includes:

- Discussions on communication successes and challenges and ways to improve it.
- A series of American Sign Language (ASL) classes for committee staff to improve communication access.
- Creating a "Sign of the Week", which all staff are required to learn and use.
- Committee members advocate for individuals to receive communication assessments, assistive technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluations, and support from Communication Specialists.

For more information, please contact committee member Stacy Phillips at stacy.phillips@temple.edu!

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Summer Issue

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Communication Tips



How to Support Communication During Transitions

Transitions are a major part of our lives. Transitions may be big such as moving to a new home, starting a new job or program, retiring, or graduating school. Transitions also happen every day from when you get out of bed in the morning and go to bed in the evening. Below are some tips for ensuring access to effective communication during transitions.

- Visual or object schedules are helpful to communicate what will be coming up.
- Using a visual timer.
- For bigger transitions, complete and share a communication profile with new support people.
- Create and share a social story to explain what will happen during the transition.
- Ensure that all new support people learn the individual's unique communication.
- Identify what equipment, tools, devices, and technology should be considered.
- Involve the individual's best communication partners.

Stories that Matter



Inez was born with a brain tumor, resulting in several seizures a day prior to having the tumor removed at a year old. Damage from the seizures and the operation left her with no speech, until she discovered music. Inez's love of music and its significance to her communication would be valuable information to include in her communication profile, which is introduced in the next section. [See Inez's story here!](#)

Resources and Upcoming Events



Bridging Knowledge to Know-How: Empowering Educators and Partners Conference

- **What:** Explore the latest insights, strategies, and tools surrounding autism, sensory disabilities, secondary transition, and supporting students with complex instructional needs.
- **When:** August 4-7, 2026
- **Where:** Lancaster Convention Center, Lancaster, PA
- [More Information](#)

The Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT) – See [ASERT'S website](#) for various resources, trainings, and upcoming events!

Bridging the Gap from Classroom to Community: Transition Resources Related to Communication – The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) has created a resource to assist students with communication as they transition from youth to adult services. Check out this great [transition resource!](#)

For questions about the transition resource or anything communication related please contact ODP's Special Populations Unit at RA-PWSpecialPopUnit@pa.gov.

Communication Tools

What is a Communication Profile?

A communication profile is a person-centered communication tool that shares important things about an individual that helps support their communication. A communication profile should be completed with the individual and their supports and should be updated regularly.

Communication profiles can benefit anyone and can be used in various settings such as schools, social groups, or places of employment. They can be used in the following ways:

- In new and unfamiliar situations (e.g., a hospital, respite, new classroom, new place of employment).
- As a transition support.
- As a training tool for new support staff who don't know the individual's unique communication.
- As a reminder for current support staff.
- With the Individual Support Plan team to think about goals and outcomes.
- As a social support to help an individual build relationships.

A sample communication profile form titled "My Communication Profile". It has a dashed box for a photo. The form is divided into several colored sections: a light blue section for "My name is:", two orange sections for "How I share information" and "How I take in information", a large purple section for "How to best support my communication?", a green section for "Things I enjoy", and a pink section for "Things that may interfere with my communication".

A communication profile is a valuable tool that can help support effective communication and help build relationships!

Did You Know?

Research estimates that adults spend about 70 to 80 percent of their waking hours engaged in some form of communication (e.g., speaking, listening, reading, writing, signing, gesturing, body language, using communication devices, etc.). This shows the importance of understanding a person's unique communication, which is why tools like the communication profile are so valuable!