

Activity: Communication Breakdown Repair



A communication breakdown occurs when the person with aphasia (PWA) knows what they want to say but cannot communicate it to the listener. This can cause frustration for both parties but with AAC we can decrease these miscommunications by assisting the PWA with additional supports. The next time an issue arises, try the activity below to see if the options on the Toolbar in TD Aphasia help clear things up.

During a Communication Breakdown:

1 Use supports.

Say "I'm not understanding what you are trying to tell me. Let's see if we can find something to help." Go through the communication tools and stop when you understand what they want to say.



2 Touch Whiteboard.

- If yes/no is difficult, trying writing 2-3 choices of what you think they need to tell you. Read them aloud and ask the PWA to point to the correct choice.
- Ask the PWA if they can draw or write a letter to try to help you guess what they need to say.



3 Touch Word Lists.

- Ask the person to pick the category that best fits what they need to tell you. Reviewing each category aloud may help.
- If you know the general category, open the folder for them and go through the choices.



4 Touch Rating Scales.

- If you know the general idea of what they are intending to communicate see if you can talk through it using the scale.
- For example, if you know it's about how they feel say, "can you point to how you feel? This is good, this is ok, and this is very upset." Be sure to use facial expressions and model pointing to the rating scale as you talk through it.



5 Touch Quickfires.

- Try using the yes/no or Personal Needs tab in Quickfires.
- In the larger grid sizes, there is a tab for "Communication Repair" that may help as well.



6 Touch Topics.

- Sometimes Topics can give context to what you are talking about.
- If you know the general topic they are trying to discuss, go to that page for them, if not review the topics and see if they can select the item they want.



7 Touch Dashboard.

- Select Calendar if you think it's about an event or time.
- Select Photo Albums if you think it's about a family member or memory.



8 Touch Keyboard.

- Ask if the PWA can select the first letter of the word they want to tell you, sometimes word prediction will help as well.



9 Repeat.

Repeat this activity during as many communication breakdowns as you can. If you determine one of these tools helps more than the others, set that option as the Home Page (Edit Mode > Page Set).

