

Multilingual: 5 ways to communicate around behaviour



When a variety of languages are used across our community, we need to think carefully about how we can communicate clearly around behaviour support, so that everyone understands our ethos, values and approach.

1 USE TOTAL COMMUNICATION

Total communication uses a combination of words, non-verbal cues, and symbols, pictures and signing to convey a message. Using a blend of these strategies can help us communicate effectively.

2 BE PATIENT AND EMPATHETIC

A language barrier can be incredibly frustrating for everyone, so it's important to be patient, kind and empathetic in any interactions. Try to imagine how it must feel for the other person, to help find ways forward together.

3 INTERPRETING VS TRANSLATING

All languages are nuanced, and direct translations do not always reflect the true meaning of different words and phrases. If possible, ask an interpreter to check for meaning so that messages are not misinterpreted or 'lost in translation'.

4 INVOLVE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

It can be helpful to involve families, as well as individuals, when communicating about behaviour, as they can often share valuable insights about effective strategies.

5 CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Individuals can sometimes feel isolated because of a language barrier. We can create positive, supportive and inclusive environments where everyone feels welcome and is valued for their contribution.

