

Photographs and pictures

Practitioners working with people with profound and complex difficulties have been successful in using images to develop communication. Some individuals who have previously used objects for communication may be able to move onto use photographs, line drawings and potentially into using symbols and text.

[Communication: key messages](#)

This extract describes how staff at a day centre use photographs to enable an individual to make choices through eye pointing.

“At the start of the afternoon session at her day centre, three photographs are placed on the tray fixed to the front of Kaylie’s wheelchair. The photographs show Kaylie herself having her hair done, stirring cooking ingredients in a bowl and, with support, rolling out some clay. A member of staff gives the ‘which?’ sign over the photographs and says: What do you want to do this afternoon, Kaylie?’

Kaylie is given time to respond. The sign and the spoken question are repeated three times as Kaylie scans the photographs. Eventually Kaylie seems to be looking consistently at the cookery photograph.

The staff member moves the other two photographs to the back of the tray, although they are still clearly visible. He says, and signs, ‘Cookery, Kaylie? Do you want to go to cookery?’ When Kaylie continues to look at the cookery photograph, the decision is made and staff support Kaylie in getting ready for her chosen activity.”

Enhancing the Quality of Life

The article also describes the range of images that can be used. These range from coloured photographs of real objects of personal significance through to black and white stylised line drawings.

[Symbols](#)

These ideas are based on the Enhancing Quality of Life Resource Pack, Byers, R., Dee, L., Hayhoe, H. and Maudslay, L. (2002) *Enhancing Quality of Life*. London: Skill and University of Cambridge which draws upon the experience of practitioners working with people with profound and complex learning difficulties across a range of contexts and in a variety of ways.

See [references](#) for details of how to order this resource.