Communication kit for patients, families and health providers

All visuals from Boardmaker.com

Alberta Health Services

Allied Health Professional
Practice & Education

About the communication kit

This kit is designed for use in health care settings to help patients and healthcare providers work together for better communication. It includes tools and communication boards to help with communication needs, such as they have trouble speaking, understanding others or expressing themself.

Chose the parts that work best for you. These resources can be downloaded and printed.

Visuals (or pictures) can be very helpful for people to understand and express themselves. They don't go away like spoken words, so they can look at them for as long as they need. Pictures can help people remember, make things clearer, prevent arguments, and simplify complicated information.

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How I communicate

See instructions on the next page.

1. The name I go by is _____

2. There may be a different name on my record (circle): no yes _____

3. My preferred language is: _____. I want to use an interpreter (circle): yes no

4. Hearing: _____ Vision:_____

5. I use _____ to communicate. It is located _____

   _____

6. My language use and understanding: _____

   _____

   _____

7. Other information I would like to share: _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

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How I communicate instructions

1. Write your name.
2. Write if you have a different name on your health record.
3. Write what language you use and circle yes if you need an interpreter.
4. Write any devices you use for hearing, such as hearing aid, cochlear implant, pocket talker. Write anything you use for vision, such as glasses, magnifying glass, braille.
5. Write your **communication tool,** for example:
   - White board
   - Paper and pen
   - iPad
   - Communication board
   - Communication device

   Write where your communication tool or hearing devices are located, for example: backpack, computer bag, purse, pocket, or bedside

6. Write how you use and understand language, for example:

   - I need extra time to process and understand what you are saying
   - Use visuals to help me understand
   - I understand short phrases / single words / pictures / sign language / limited understanding

7. Share any other Information you think is helpful, for example:
   - Put my communication book in easy reach so I can point with my stylus.
   - Make sure my hearing aids are in and the batteries are working
   - I use switches to access my device. Make sure they are in the right position.
   - I need a communication partner to help me with visual and/or auditory scanning to communicate. Make sure my communication or alphabet board are in the right position.
   - Body movements/gestures help me.
   - I look up to say "yes".

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Healthcare providers: Facility use
cleaning and set up

You can **print** this kit for a patient to use. To assemble this kit, you will need to print the resources in this document and include the following:
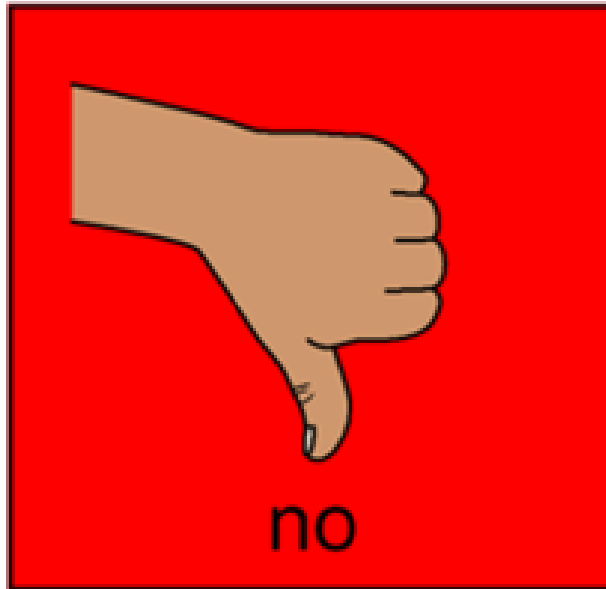
- A **laminated piece of white paper**/card stock (makeshift whiteboard)
- Fishing line (if you wish to attach the marker to the clip board)

- A **plastic** clip board (wipeable)

- Pen

- White board marker

- Paper

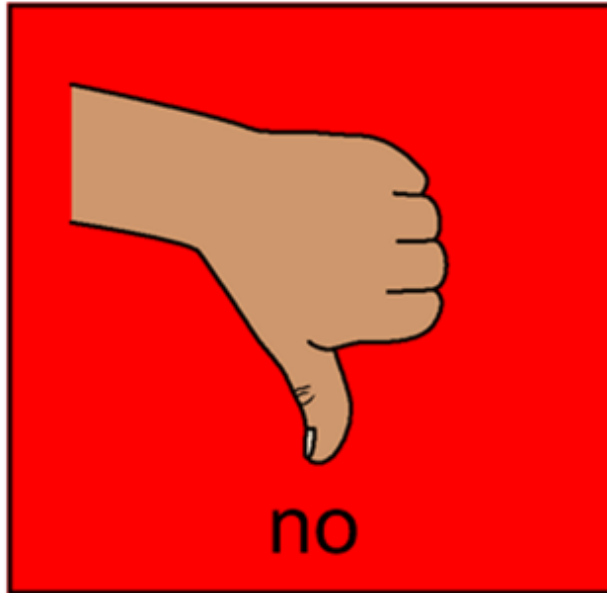When printing and providing a kit, please consider the following:
- Print resources in **colour** (if possible).
- For multi-patient use, **laminate** resources or place them in a **page protector**.
  - When laminating, ensure you keep a 0.5-inch border around each item when cutting for a strong seal. I
  - f you cannot laminate or use a page protector, give each patient their own kit.
- **Clipboards** provided to the patient **must be plastic/wipeable**
- Laminated or page protected resources and clipboards can be sanitized by:
  - **Cleaning** first with (soap and warm water, or an AHS-approved disinfectant wipe to remove debris) and then,
  - **Sanitizing** using another AHS-approved disinfectant wipe**.**
- If you attach a marker to the clipboard (to keep it from getting lost), ensure you use a product that can be sanitized (e.g., fishing line). Rope or twine cannot be sanitized sufficiently.
- In addition to these resources, please also give the patient a **pen and paper**. This allows them to write messages ahead of time and save frequent messages.

When sanitizing resources and the clipboard, do not to place sanitized items back in a dirty container. **Clearly separate dirty and clean items.** You can sanitize the container you used to transport the items before cleaning, so you have a clean place to put items back into.

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Tool For the patient to say "yes, no, or I don't know"

yes

no

I don't know

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Tool For the patient to say "yes, no, or I don't know"

yes

no

I don't know

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Patient communication board: To help patient communicate with others.

Pain scale:
- 10, 9 — extreme pain
- 8, 7 — severe pain
- 6 — moderate pain
- 5 — moderate pain
- 4, 3 — mild pain
- 2, 1 — no pain

difficulty breathing | difficulty swallowing | difficulty seeing | difficulty hearing | hot | cold

headache | sick | pain | dizzy | confused | OK

yes | no | I don't know

talk to doctor | contact family | I have a question

yes/no? Ask me a yes/no question | ABC spell | spiritual/religious need

hungry | thirsty | help with toilet | sleep

hearing aid | uncomfortable/reposition | TV on/off | lights on/off

medicine | personal hygiene | glasses | date/time?

Universal core board: 36 useful single words to use alone or in combination for a range of purposes.

what	why	who	where	when	stop	
I	not	can	same	different	finished	
you	do	get	all	some	good	
she	go	help	like	in	more	
he	look	make	open	on	here	
it	put	turn	want	up	that	

Body pictures: To show body parts for pain, injury, medical testing and questions.

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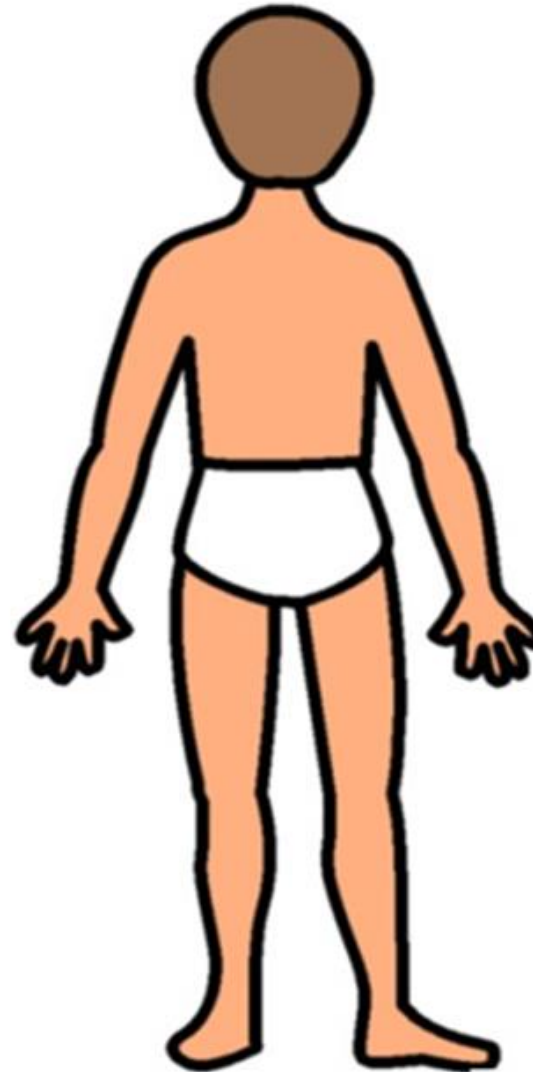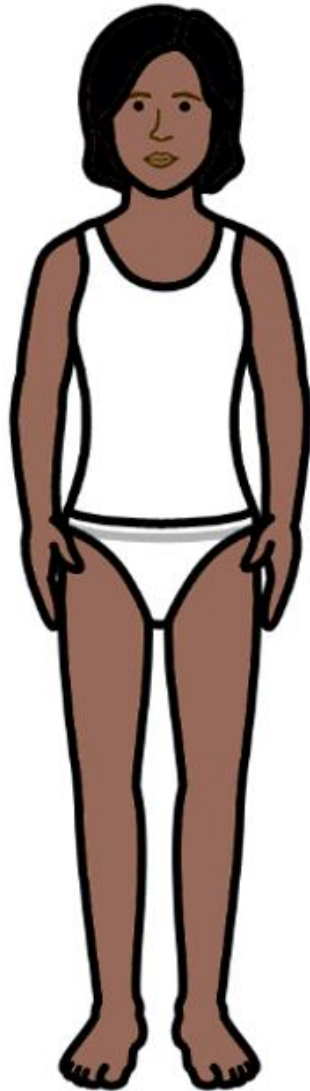
Healthcare provider board: To help patient and healthcare provider understand each other. Healthcare providers talk, point to matching pictures and wait for patient to indicate they understand (e.g., nod, slow eye blink).

doctor	nurse	physical therapist	occupational therapist	speech therapist
recreational therapist	psychologist	social worker	ultrasound	respiratory therapist
MRI	x-ray	IV	operation	ventilator
G-tube feeding	needle	thermometer	medicine	sit
vitals	move bed/unit	exercise	call family	any questions?
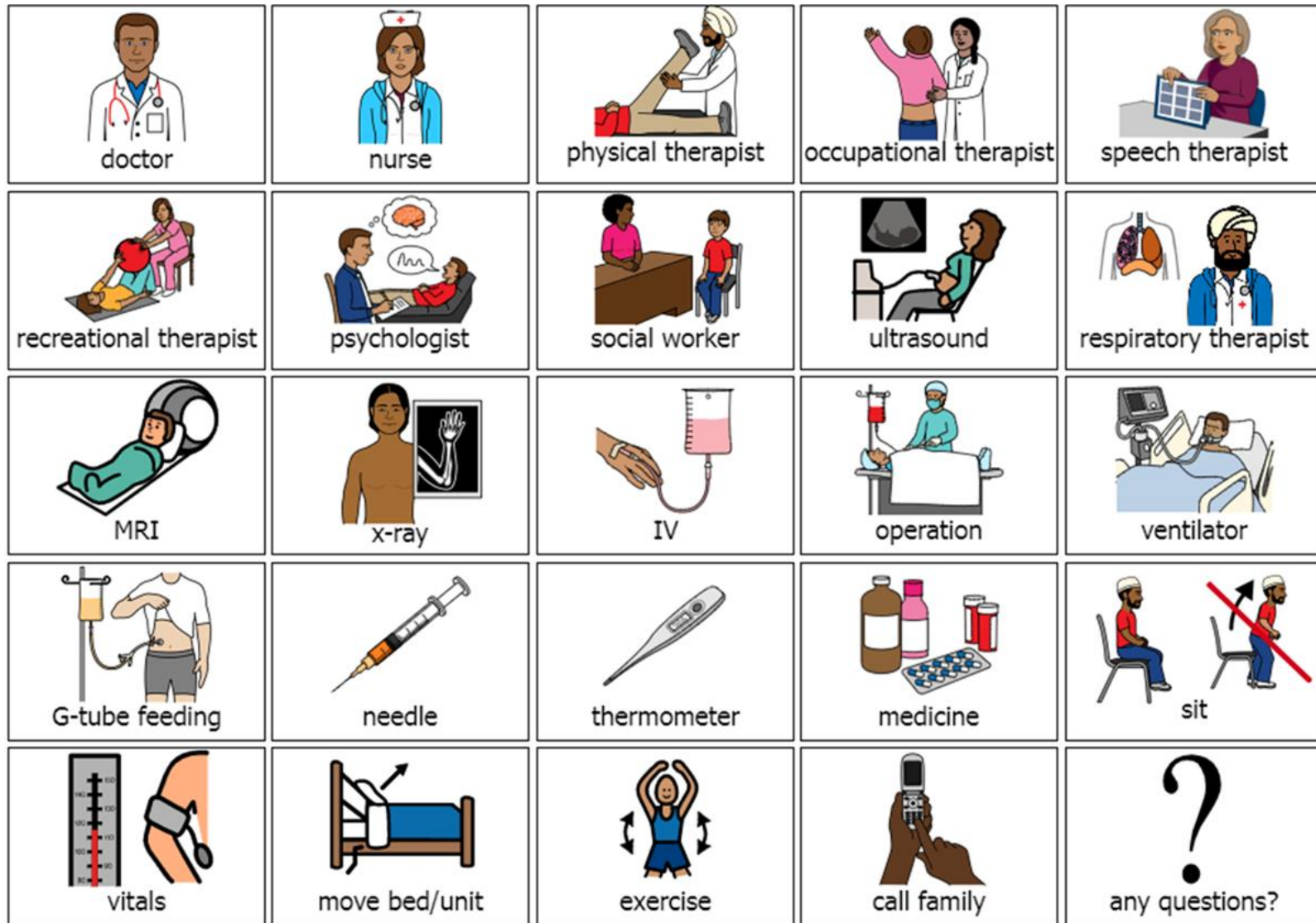
Pain communication board: To help the patient and healthcare provider communicate about pain.

Yes	PAIN SCALE	No

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

NO PAIN	MILD PAIN	MODERATE PAIN	SEVERE PAIN	EXTREME PAIN

sharp pain	dull pain	aching pain	numb pain
burning pain	stinging pain	throbbing pain	pressure

pain medication

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Alphabet board: For patients who can spell by pointing or scanning. If patient cannot touch board, establish a way for them to signal "Yes" (e.g., long eye blink). Then, point to each row and ask, "is it in this row?". Wait for patient's signal before moving to the next row. After a "yes", go through each item in that row and wait for a "yes" response. They do not need to indicate "no" for undesired options.

A	B	C	D	Yes	Space	1	6
E	F	G	H	No	Mistake	2	7
I	J	K	L	M	N	3	8
O	P	Q	R	S	T	4	9
U	V	W	X	Y	Z	5	0

Keyboard alphabet board: For patients who can spell by pointing or scanning. If patient cannot touch board, establish a way tor them to signal "Yes" (e.g., long eye blink). Then, point to each row and ask, "is it in this row?". Wait for patient's signal before moving to the next row. After a "yes", go through each item in that row and wait for a "yes" response. They do not need to indicate "no" for undesired options.

Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P
A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	
Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	.	?	

ERROR	NEW WORD	I DON'T KNOW	YES	NO

| 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
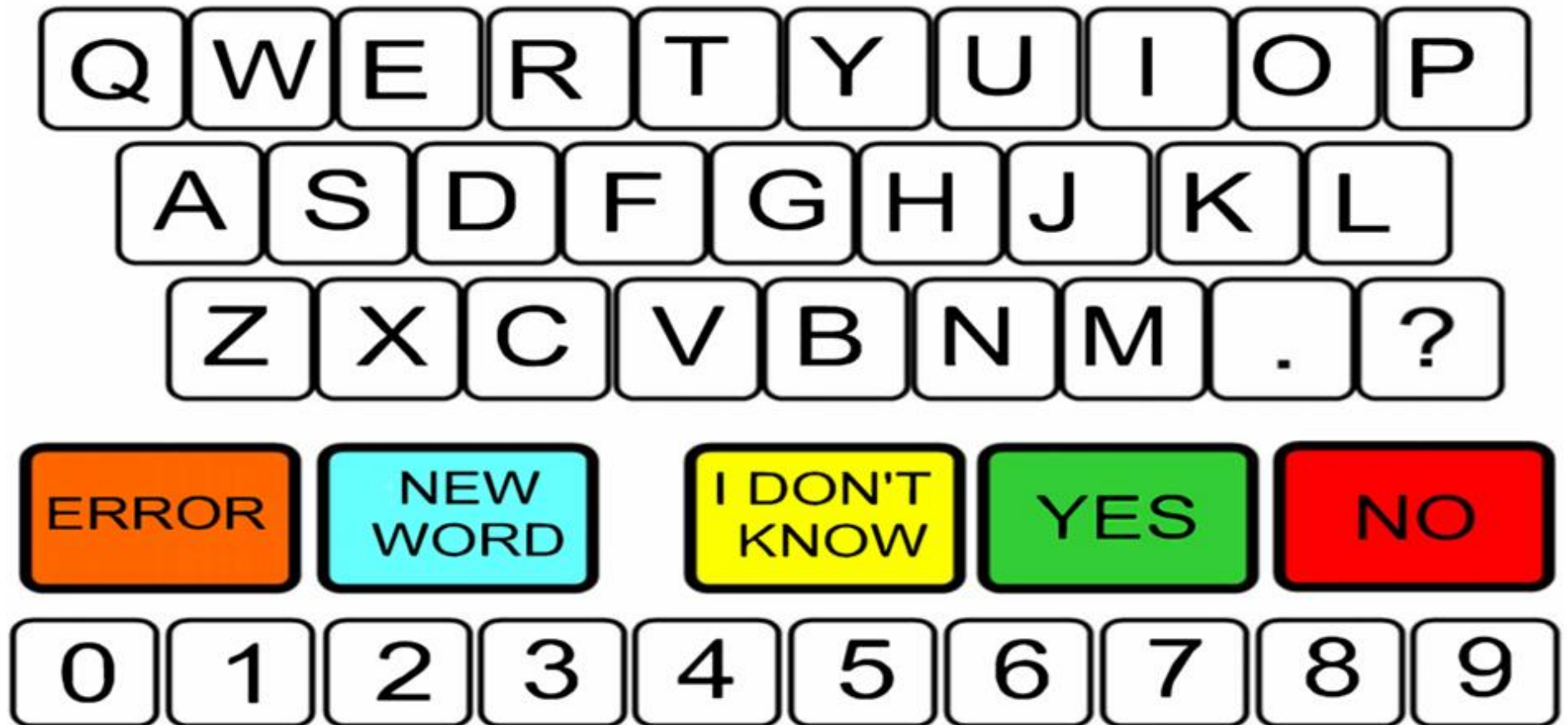
Communication board instructions: For patients without an established communication method.

A patient may develop a need for a communication board while in hospital. To help a patient learn how to use the communication board:

1. Tell the patient this is one way for them to communicate while they cannot talk—for example, while on a ventilator.
2. Review the messages on the Patient Communication Board. Give the patient an example of how to use the communication board: If you would like a "blanket," you can touch the "blanket" message on the board.
3. Show them the alphabet boards. Tell them they can use either of these boards to spell what they want to say. This could be the name of a person or a short message.
4. Leave all communication boards close to the patient. Hand the board to the patient when you're communicating together. Encourage them to use both the phrases and alphabet board.

If the patient can't use their hands to touch the board, help them using the following method:
1. Establish a way for them to indicate a "yes" response (such as looking up or making a sound)
2. Point to each row in turn and ask if the message or letter is in that row. Pause between rows so they have time to scan the row: "Row one, pause. Row two, pause."
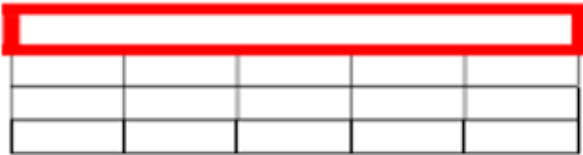
3. The patient needs to use their "yes" response to indicate this is the row they want. They **do not need** to indicate a "no" for each row they do not want.
4. Next, from the row they chose, move across each item in the row and name the item. Be sure to pause between each item.
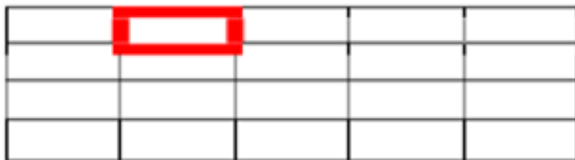
5. The patient needs to use their "yes" response when you reach the item or letter they want.
6. If spelling, you can guess the word after 2 letters are selected, but make sure to verify with the patient if it is correct.

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Communication kit example

Procedure Board with Body

- Point to pictures on the board as you talk to help a person understand an upcoming medical procedure

ICU/ Hospital Needs and **Alphabetical Letter Board**

- Includes yes/no, body, numbers

Instructions for how to use a **Communication or Letter Board**

- If a patient cannot point, support them by using **row/column scanning** (see sheet for details)
- You must determine a 'yes' signal first

Information on **Communication Access** and **Accessibility Symbols**

- Stickers of communication difficulty and hearing loss symbols
- Learn about the symbols
- Learn how to display the symbols (with consent)

Plastic Clipboard with Makeshift **Whiteboard** and **Marker**

- Provides the person with writing utensils.
- Wipeable
- Marker attached via fishing line

Pen and Paper

Yes/No/I Don't Know Visuals

- Encourage the person to point to their answer if verbal answers are absent, unclear or inconsistent

Keyboard Letter and Pain Scale Boards

- Some clients prefer to use a keyboard layout- check in about this
- Pain descriptors included on scale

Communication Notice and **How I Communicate** Poster

- Complete "**How I Communicate**" information sheet (instructions included) and post at bedside and in chart
- Once complete- post **Communication Notice** on patient's door (with consent) to inform others.

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