Mental Health

Communication Pack

Version 2

Guide to using the communication book, flashcards and easy read resources in the Mental Health Pack

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Introduction

This pack contains a communication book, resources and flashcards designed to support mental health professionals.

This project was developed by Widgit Software in partnership with Dr Geoff Marston, Consultant Psychiatrist for adults with a learning disability, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, and Dr Irene Cormac, Honorary Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, Rampton Hospital, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Communication book

This book is designed to help those carrying out mental health assessments, either in psychiatric or physical health care settings. It can be used to ask questions and understand responses from people for whom communication is difficult.

Symbols are an effective communication tool in assisting dialogue with children, people with learning difficulties or disabilities, for people who do not speak English and for those who cannot speak or hear due to their current condition.

The assessor can point to the symbols to add meaning to any questions or statements when speaking with the patient. The patient can also respond by pointing to symbols and by using flashcards.

The structure of the book is designed to complement the order of a standard psychiatric assessment based around the Present State Examination. At the back of the book there are core responses, for example 'Yes' and 'No'; as well as a generic scale.

Resources and flashcards

A range of resources to support both mental health and general hospital admissions are included in the pack, along with simplified explanations of the main sections of the Mental Health Act 1983 (England and Wales). The pack will be subject to regular review to ensure information is kept updated.

Pack Contents

Mental Health Communication Book

The book contains banks of symbols to be used during a psychiatric evaluation. The symbols are designed to help psychiatrists and other mental health professionals ask questions and understand responses from people for whom communication is difficult.

Mental Health Resources

These resources support patients who are going to a psychiatric ward - from what happens on arrival through to discharge, and an explanation of their Rights whilst in hospital.

- **Going to a Psychiatric Ward** (FS) (KS)
- **Going to a Psychiatric Ward Checklist**
- **Mental Health Professionals**
- **Your Rights in Hospital** (FS) (KS)
- **Your Treatment and Care** (FS) (KS)
- **Discharge Plan** (FS) (KS)

Mental Health Act 1983 Sections

These resources explain the patient's rights and choices when detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 for the following Sections of the Act.

- **Section 2** (FS) (KS)
- **Section 3** (FS) (KS)
- **Section 4** (FS) (KS)
- **Section 5-2** (FS) (KS)
- **Section 5-4** (FS) (KS)
- **Section 17** (FS) (KS)
- **Section 37** (FS) (KS)
- **Section 37-41** (FS) (KS)
- **Mental Health Tribunal** (FS) (KS)

Psychiatrist/Psychologist Visits

The following resources will help with explaining to the patient what will happen when they visit a mental health professional.

- **Going to a Psychiatrist** (FS) (KS)
- **Going to a Child Psychiatrist** (FS) (KS)
- **Going to a Psychologist** (FS) (KS)

General Hospital Resources

The following resources cover general hospital visits - from preparing to stay in hospital, through to leaving. There is also a communication passport to help staff to understand the patient's needs.

- **Hospital Communication Passport**
- **Health Check** (FS) (KS)
- **Going to Hospital** (FS) (KS)
- **Going to Hospital Checklist**
- **Leaving Hospital** (FS) (KS)
- **Leaving Hospital Checklist**

Flashcards

There is a set of flashcards which cover all of the vocabulary; and follow the order of the symbols presented in the Mental Health Communication Book. The flashcards are best used when printed on card and cut out. Multiple cards can be made for common words.

Key:

(FS) = Full Symbols
(KS) = Key Symbols

More information:

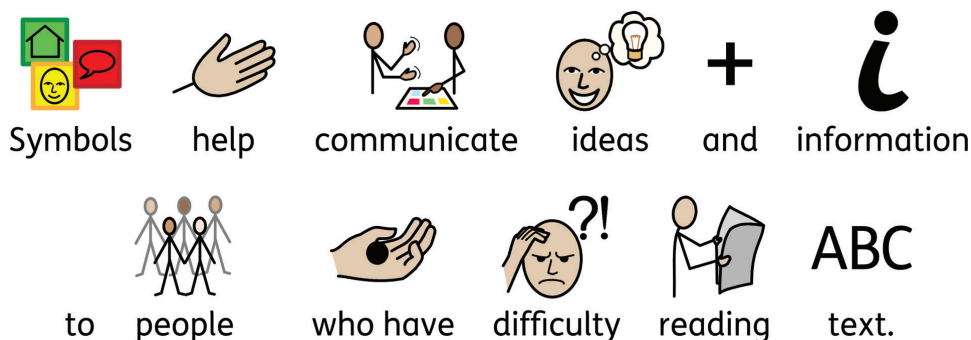See page 10 for descriptions of the different types of resources.

Widgit Symbols

The ever expanding Widgit Symbol Set contains more than 18,000 symbols, which cover an English vocabulary of over 50,000 words.

Widgit's simply drawn, colourful symbols each illustrate a single concept in a clear and concise way, and cover a range of topics wide enough to make them suitable for symbol users of all ages and abilities.

Widgit Symbols are used all over the world, supporting 17 languages, increasing the accessibility of written text and giving readers of all literacy levels greater access to information.

As the Widgit Symbol Set is designed specifically for written information, Widgit Symbol users can develop real independence in their reading and writing.

Symbols help communicate ideas and + information

to people who have difficulty reading ABC text.

Widgit Software

Widgit have an extensive range of products and resources to suit all needs.

Widgit produce a variety of software for creating symbol materials. Available for PC, iPad and online.

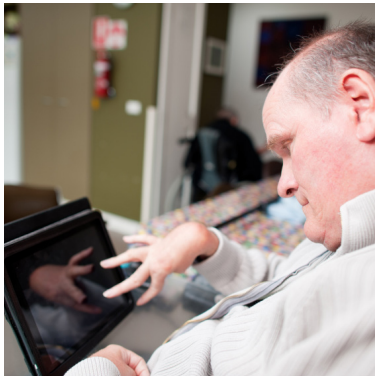Specific symbols are available for healthcare settings.

Visit the website for more information:

www.widgit.com

Who uses symbols?

Text with symbol support helps people with a range of abilities to communicate, access information and be more independent. Widgit Symbols aid understanding and communication for people who find reading text difficult. Widgit Symbols add visual support to the printed word, giving easier access to information and separating it from the challenge of reading.

Examples of people who use symbols:

- Children and adults with a learning impairment or a communication challenge such as Autism, Down Syndrome or Dyslexia

- People for whom English is an additional language

- Children beginning to read or who struggle with text

- Children and adults with severe physical difficulties that use Augmentative and Alternative Communication

- People in emergency situations

- People with low literacy

Using the pack

The book and flashcards can be used to aid psychiatric evaluation. They can assist with communication not only for those with speech or language difficulties, but also assist those who have difficulty talking about themselves.

The symbols can provide a vocabulary when the patient doesn't have the language skills to talk about what they want. They can act as prompts to help convey emotions, feelings and experiences that are difficult to verbalise.

New and difficult situations can be distressing, especially for people who need clear routines, such as people with autism. The resources can be used to help prepare someone for what is going to happen or is happening, such as going to a hospital or visiting a health professional. The resources can be used to help to reassure a patient for example about what to expect during treatment, and discharge from hospital.

Patients must be informed about the choices they can make and the legalities of their situation. Whether or not a patient is an informal, voluntary patient or if they are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, it is important to provide information about their Rights.

The resources will also provide the patient with information on how they can get help, who will support them and what to do if they disagree with their treatment or care.

Legal Responsibilities

The UK's **Equality Act 2010*** places an obligation on all organisations to ensure that any services they provide for members of the public are extended equally to people with disabilities, including those who have difficulty in reading or understanding the meaning of words. The key principles in this legislation include rights, independence, choice and inclusion. The emphasis is on what people can do, and not what they are unable to do.

* www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/RightsAndObligations/DG_4019061

Working with Widgit

At Widgit we welcome the opportunity to work with professionals to develop new materials. This produces credible resources on a specific subject, whilst ensuring the symbol usage and content is appropriate for the audience.
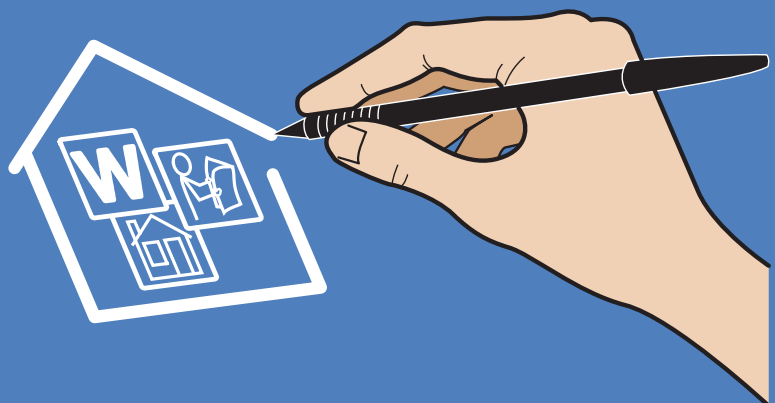
Our creative team works in partnership with organisations both at home and abroad to produce symbolised documents which cater for their individual requirements.

We consult with the client throughout the design process, creating new symbols where necessary, to ensure that the end result is fit for purpose and appropriate for different cultures and languages.

We can also advise you on any copyright and distribution issues that may be encountered.

Our services include:

- Translating information into symbols
- Symbol signage
- Resource development
- Professional design work
- Symbol design
- Simplifying language
- Advice and training
- Symbol licensing

For more information, please visit:
www.widgit.com/accessibleinformation
You can see examples of health materials here:
www.widgit-health.com/downloads

Types of Resources

Symbols can be used in different ways depending on the patient's communication and language needs. Most of the resources supplied in the pack are available in two formats; Key Symbols and Full Symbols.

Key Symbols

Key symbols are simply one or two symbols that can be used alongside text to convey a single piece of information. At most, they provide the same amount of information as a short sentence of text. They can help reinforce meaning and give reassurance by acting as reminders for any level of reader.

Key Symbols work best to reinforce meaning to a person who is able to read text. They can also support non-readers when assisted by someone who can help them understand the message indicated by the key symbols.

Your care team will work with you to plan your treatment and care.

Full Symbols

Full symbol documents have a higher level of support than key symbols. Their meaning is supported by illustrating every information-carrying word in the content with a symbol.

Full symbols are appropriate for people who are reading the documents independently, as it allows them to gain the near 'word for word' understanding that a brief summary cannot. People who have already used symbols will be most familiar with this method of support.

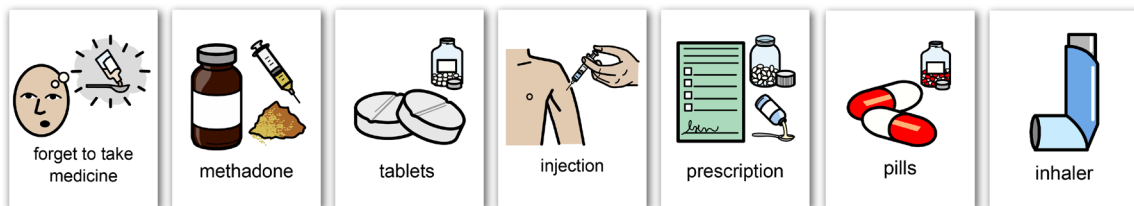Your care team   will work with you   to   plan   your   treatment   and   care.

Flashcards

Flashcards can be used during a conversation as individual prompts. They can support expression of feelings and thoughts by allowing the patient to choose cards that reflect their views. A 'good' to 'bad' scale, where the patient places cards relatively can help aid the discussion. Flashcards can be particularly effective when displaying a series of events as a timeline, with one symbol representing each event in the sequence.
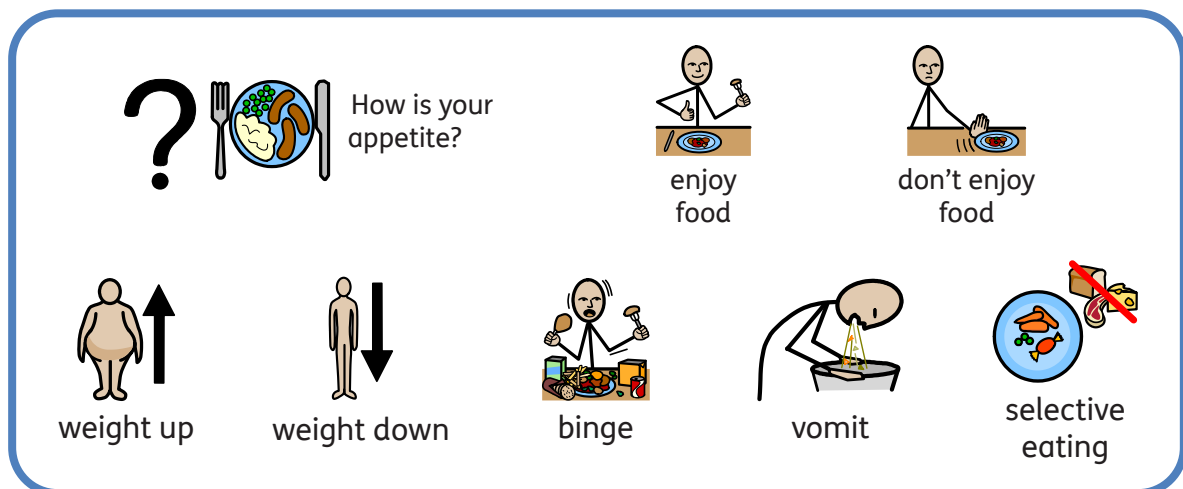
The flashcards in the pack cover all of the vocabulary in the communication book.

Communication book

The book contains a comprehensive set of symbol-supported vocabulary. Each page covers a different topic related to the various domains of the Mental State Examination.

At the back of the book there are 'core responses' that may be used at any time; for example, the responses 'Yes' and 'No'. For easy access for the patient, these pages can be photocopied and flashcards can be given to the patient to use to communicate.

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Providing communication support for healthcare and medical professionals

Easy communication

Being able to communicate with someone quickly and clearly when they are in a health emergency is vital to saving lives.
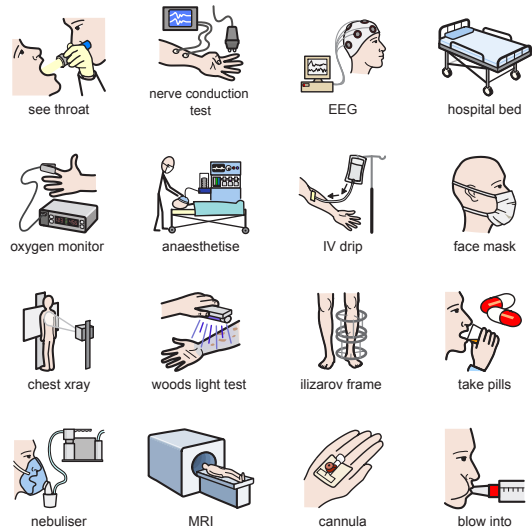
In routine healthcare, clear communication improves the effectiveness of diagnosis and treatment, leading to quicker and more successful recovery.

Inclusive access

Symbols are an effective tool in assisting communication with people that have learning disabilities, people who do not speak English and people who cannot speak or hear due to their current condition.

New Widgit Symbols covering hospital and health topics have been developed in partnership with leading medical practitioners.

see throat | nerve conduction test | EEG | hospital bed

oxygen monitor | anaesthetise | IV drip | face mask

chest xray | woods light test | ilizarov frame | take pills

nebuliser | MRI | cannula | blow into

Health products and resources

Widgit works with health professionals to provide symbol-based communication and information to support patients.

www.widgit-health.com