

Individual Medical Encounter Communication Collection

If you or someone you know are communication vulnerable and sometimes need communication supports in high-stakes situations, medical encounters can be a challenge. Too many of them result in communication breakdowns that impact negatively on patient outcomes. There are, however, some fairly simple ways to help make these interactions less likely to fail.

Provided below is a collection of resources to help these situations go more smoothly. These mostly free resources include communication boards in many languages and formats, checklists and information to help you prepare for a visit to the doctor, and health passports to keep your medical information organized and handy.

- **Central Coast Children's Foundation medical encounter communication board (free)** This free downloadable communication sheet has been specifically designed for regular medical encounters in clinics or doctor's offices, and could also prove useful during emergency room visits.. On one side of the board are general phrases and statements one might use in a doctor's office. On the other side are questions and statements that one might need in conversing with a doctor.
<http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/userfiles/file/PatientEncountercommunicationboard.pdf>
- **Toby Churchill Alphabet Board (free)** The Toby Churchill Alphabet Board is a free and effective support for communication. Literate clients can use it to spell out messages as a supplement their current means of communication (e.g., as a backup to a high-tech communication aid), or as part of a broader communication strategy. The PDF that follows contains 4 choices of keyboard – QWERTY, qwerty, ABCD or abcd. Each also contains some useful symbols depicting a variety of feelings, plus a few extra common words (and, the, yes). Individuals just point to the letters to spell words in order to communicate. <http://www.toby-churchill.com/news/free-downloads-and-support-alphabet-communication-boards/>
- **Temple University Emergency Communication Board: English/Spanish/Haitian Creole (free)** This communication aid includes key messages ("I can't speak, but I can hear and understand you"), symbols of important words, a pain scale ("I will point to where I hurt"), and other valuable features. It includes a number and letter "keyboard." On the back is a personal information form to be filled out by an individual, a family member, a familiar support person, a doctor, or an emergency responder.
<http://disabilities.temple.edu/aacvocabulary/e4all.shtml#index>
- **My Health Passport for Hospital/Clinic Visits. Florida Center for Inclusive Communities. (free)** FCIC's *My Health Passport* is a health

advocacy document that describes the unique supports and preferences of an individual. It is designed to be shared with many types of healthcare providers, in clinic and hospital settings, especially for those who are not very familiar in providing care to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Hard copies of *My Health Passports* are currently available, and can be ordered free of charge by contacting [Dr. Liz Perkins](#) or (813) 974-7076. The forms are also available for free download.

<http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/resources/materials/health.html>

- **Picture Communication Symbols, Department of Communities (Disability Care Services) and the Department of Community Safety (Queensland Ambulance Service) (free)** This communication board was developed as a tool to enhance communication between paramedics and patients with communication vulnerabilities at the first point of contact in an emergency medical situation in Queensland, Australia, but it has broader uses, for example, in emergency rooms. It includes a visual pain scale, body outlines to help locate sources of pain, tips for interacting with injured individuals, and other useful features.
<https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/documents/community/medical-signing-board.pdf>
- **Widgit's Hospital Procedures. (free)** A series of resources designed to help patients with learning difficulties understand the procedures, sequence of events and people associated with a visit to hospital.
http://www.widgit.com/resources/health/hospital_procedures/index.htm
- **The Red Cross emergency contact card (free)**
http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240194_ECCard.pdf
- **How to ask "yes" "no" questions (free)** This one page downloadable sheet can be used to help health care professionals ask yes/no questions more productively.
http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/userfiles/file/HOWTOASKYES_NoQsdocx.pdf
- **ICE (In case of emergency) Communication Card from Widgit. (\$25, ICE (In case of emergency) Communication Card from Widgit. (\$25, Canadian (about \$20 US), for a pack of 20)** The Widgit ICE Communication Card is credit card sized and folds flat and thin to fit in most wallets and purses. It easily folds out accordion-style to a larger sheet. One side contains personal ICE information, on which individuals can write necessary health

and personal contact information. On the reverse side is a compact symbol communication sheet containing symbols and phrases for quick essential non-verbal communication. <http://www.bridges-canada.com/symbolizing/software-products/widgit-health/ice.aspx>