

REFLECTING WITHOUT WRITING

Supported Conversation

Reflect together without pressure

A practical guide with no written answers required.

START HERE

A way to reflect that fits you

A support person can make reflection easier by reducing the demand to organise everything alone. Their role is to help you communicate in your own way, not to interpret you, finish your thoughts or decide what you mean.

What this approach can offer

This approach can work with a trusted friend, family member, therapist, advocate or support worker. The person reflecting may speak, gesture, use AAC, point, choose between options, pause or say no. Communication does not need to look one particular way.

Set it up gently

Agree on a purpose and a stop signal before starting. The support person can ask whether you want them to listen, offer choices, help make a decision or write down your words. Choose a quieter setting and enough time for processing.

When it may be useful

This can help when someone wants company, more processing time or help finding a way to communicate. The support person's role is to increase choice and clarity, not to guess what the person means or decide for them.

A few reminders

- There is no right answer or correct way to take part.
- You can use a word, gesture, choice, image, AAC, pause or silence.
- You can skip, change or stop the activity at any point.

You are the person who decides what your response means.

TRY IT

A short guided practice

Move through these steps at your own pace. You can do one step and stop, or ask someone you trust to read each step aloud.

1. Choose a small focus

Think of one moment, feeling, preference or decision from today. Keep the focus small enough to approach without explaining everything.

2. Try the method

- Step 1. Ask permission before beginning: "Would a short check-in help, or would you rather not do this now?"
- Step 2. Offer one plain question, then wait. Avoid repeating it quickly or adding more questions while the person is processing.
- Step 3. Accept words, gestures, AAC, pointing, changes in expression or no answer. Check meaning gently rather than guessing.
- Step 4. Reflect back what you understood: "I heard that you want more time. Have I got that right?" Let the person correct or reject your interpretation.
- Step 5. End with a choice: stop, continue, take a break, change topic, ask for practical support or keep the reflection private.

3. Let a question guide you

- Would you like me to listen, offer choices or help with a next step?
- Would you rather speak, point, show me, use AAC or pass?
- Have I understood, or would you like to correct me?

A short example

A support person asks, "Would you like quiet, help with the next step, or someone to stay nearby?" They show the options and wait. You point to "stay nearby." They check their understanding and follow your lead.

4. Choose how to finish

Notice whether you want to continue, pause, ask for support, take one practical step or leave the reflection unfinished. No written record is needed.

MAKE IT YOURS

Adapt the activity to your needs

The method should fit the person, not the other way around. Keep what helps and change anything that adds pressure.

Ways to adapt

- Offer two or three concrete options, including "none" and "not now". Wait longer than feels natural before asking again.
- Use the person's communication system and familiar words. Do not remove, withhold or speak over it.
- If the person wants help recording or scribing, write their words accurately and ask permission before keeping or sharing them.

Keep it workable

Agree on a way to say stop, pass or change topics. Ask before taking notes or sharing anything. If a gesture is unclear, check rather than assume. "I am not sure" is better than filling in the answer.

When to pause

Do not use a supported conversation to pressure someone to disclose, agree, make eye contact or answer immediately. The person can stop or change the format at any point.

Take something with you

Good support makes more room for the person's meaning and choice. The conversation can be useful even when it ends without a decision.

A gentle reminder

Reflection can be spoken, shown, felt, chosen, moved through or shared. You do not have to turn an experience into writing for it to matter.

For more support, you can speak with someone you trust or a qualified professional. Space to Breathe Therapy can be contacted to ask whether its support may be right for you.