

Communication Disability

A Communication Hub resource

(electronic bubbles pop)

(note swooshes)

(gentle upbeat music)

- I just describe my disability with, just autism in general. I need help with lots of stuff with like, my mental health, sometimes explaining myself as well. And that's it.

- Communication disability is when someone has a difficulty in being able to communicate and a difficulty in being able to be understood or understanding language or written text.

- My name is Bruce Aisthorpe. I was working overseas, but I had a stroke 10 years ago. So now after that, no working, so in Australia. Now, it's speech therapy, keep going 10 years later left. So it's Monday to Thursday.

- A communication disability or communication differences occur when a person has difficulty communicating what they want, to who they want, how they want, and when they want.

- Paloma's communication difficulty is really, I guess that she's nonverbal. So she doesn't have any formal language that she uses that everyone around her - not just us - can understand. And that makes things quite difficult for her to be able to express what she wants and what she needs. I guess her other difficulty is knowing whether she understands.

- I have hearing aids, which I've had for, I suppose four or five years now. And so I've found that necessary to hear better. I must admit that I don't wear them the whole time and I get into trouble from my hearing aid experts about that. But I find that they are necessary and helpful.

- When I'm with people, like carers, sometimes I am too frustrated for both of us. I feel I am supported in a way, I feel happy and safe when the communication between us is working.

- If they can't get their message across then that can be very disabling. And similarly, if people are speaking to them and they can't understand what they're saying or what they're communicating to them, that can be very disabling as well.

- But I don't consider my communication needs as complex 'cause before the iPad, I was only writing my messages out with pen and paper. As far as supporting my communication needs, I really only need help to make sure my device, or one of my devices, is charged. Or I have become creative, making up my own signs and different ways with different people. I have one method I use with only family, and we developed that pretty fast. So I just write in the air the word they can't understand, but only a few people can get that.

- Ten years ago, no words. So now it's 10 years later, it's not big sentences, but it's okay. So yeah.

- And sometimes he struggles when there are a lot of instructions to follow, he struggles when he has to write down what he understood about a book. And if the book has no visual clues is very hard for him.

- People expect the words to come out a certain way. It becomes even more challenging, or just as challenging, with technology. If you get on a video call, again there's nothing that says that I have a stutter. So people might actually think your internet connection is bad. "Wait, are you buffering? What's happening there? Your words sound a bit choppy." "No, I just have a stutter. Just wait."

- Sometimes a communication disability isn't just about not being able to speak or say something or show something. Sometimes it's also not about being able to understand and that could be you know, having hearing difficulties like a lot of our First Nations kids do, or it could be having trouble taking in that information and processing it in a way that's useful to us.

(gentle upbeat music)