

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

Laís S. Costa and collaborators



Guidelines to support accessible
and inclusive communication



Do not normalize exclusion!

Respect the right to accessible communication and report any violations by dialling 100, when in Brazil!



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ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

This booklet gives tips on:

- How to facilitate accessible communication.
- How to refer to persons with disabilities.
- Accessibility in meetings and documents.

In Brazil, persons with disabilities' rights, fundamental freedoms and citizenship are guaranteed by:

- Enactment of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a constitutional amendment via Decree 6949/2009.
- Brazilian Inclusion Law for Persons with Disabilities – BIL (Law 13,146/2015), alongside other laws.

Accessible communication is a right guaranteed by the BIL.

Conferences, seminars, workshops and other scientific or cultural events put on or financed by the government must ensure accessibility and provide assistive technology resources.

(Article 71, Brazilian Inclusion Law)



BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS

In healthcare, barriers to communication prevent or hinder persons with disabilities from:

- Receiving a **quick and accurate diagnosis**.
- **Talking** about their **state of health**.
- **Participating in decisions**.



HOW TO ENSURE ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

Accessible communication varies according to the type of disability.

Adaptations and the use of varied resources are essential to ensure that all people can communicate effectively and participate in society:

- **Persons with visual impairments** benefit from reading in Braille, enlarged images, audio description of images, texts compatible with screen readers, description of images in digital environments and audible alerts in public environments.
- **Persons with hearing impairments** benefit from interpretation in sign language, subtitles, audio transcription and lipreading.

Ask people what barriers prevent or hinder communication and what support is needed.

- **Persons with intellectual disabilities** find it easier to understand information presented simply. Use short sentences, easy-to-understand words, and images that help them to understand concepts. Avoid difficult words. When technical terms need to be used, explain their meaning.
- **Persons with speech impairments** and complex communication needs can use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) boards to communicate, to adhere to health treatments, to learn to read and write or to socialize.

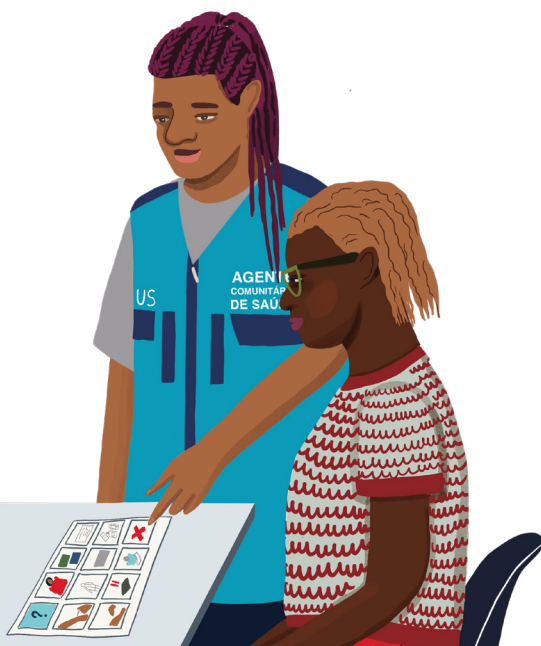


BENEFITS OF AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)

AAC refers to the use of resources, techniques and strategies that remove barriers to communication for persons with speech impairments. It allows communication through pictograms (simple drawings), which fosters people's protagonism.

AAC is an inexpensive accessible communication resource that benefits people who are unable, whether temporarily or permanently, to communicate orally.

AAC can involve methods that use technology (such as electronic devices and apps) and that do not (such as gestures, signs, pictures or pictogram boards printed on paper).



BENEFITS OF AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)

AAC boards are developed according to the specific needs of users or purpose of the services offered in the places where they are provided.

In healthcare, they can be used to support reception at the local health centre, communication of diagnoses, recognition of symptoms and adherence to treatments.

As an example, the board below is used for checkups and appointments with persons with disabilities at a health centre in Rio de Janeiro.



Check out other AAC boards used in healthcare

Simão, K/ Núcleo de Proj. Especiais SMPDRio-Autor dos pictogramas: Sergio Palao www.arasaac.org Licença: CC BY-NC-SA Gob. Aragón

BENEFITS OF EASY LANGUAGE

Easy language is a direct and easy-to-understand form of communication. **It benefits everybody and help them interact with each other.**

Guidelines for producing material in easy language:

- Easy text: direct, short and clear. Choose easy-to-understand and well-known words.
- Easy drawings: use images to facilitate reading and understanding of information.
- Validation: show your material to its intended audience. Adjust it to ensure understanding.



Learn more about
easy language

PROPER USE OF WORDS: HOW TO REFER TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

✓ RIGHT

Usar Person combined with disability or other characteristic.

Examples: blind person, deaf person, person with Down syndrome, wheelchair user.

Use the words **issue or condition**.

Use the words **genetic condition or genetic arrangement**.

Say **person without disability**.

× WRONG

Do not use disabled, differently abled, special needs, PwD.

Do not use offensive and prejudiced words: invalid, exceptional, retarded, sick, angel, special, deaf-mute.

Do not use the words **illness or problem**.

Do not use the words **genetic aberration, anomaly or error**.

Do not say **normal person**.

When in doubt, ask the person what they prefer to be called.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS

- Use **simple fonts** (no serifs).
- Describe all images using #imagedescription.
- Use **images that are described by screen readers**, such as emojis (DO NOT use stickers).
- **Share documents in accessible formats**, such as videos with subtitles, transcripts and sign language interpretation.
- Use easy language **with short sentences and everyday words**.



Communication is a right that permits other rights, such as participation and autonomy, to be realized.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Before the meeting:

- **Ask if anyone needs accessibility resources.**
- **Inform everybody how the platform works.**
- Ensure **the material presented at the meeting is accessible.**
- **Share material before the event.**

During the meeting:

- Have each person **make an audio description** and say their name before speaking.
- Use **short sentences** and **everyday words** (easy language).
- **Speak slowly** and pause to allow time for interpretation.
- Use **audio description resources, sign language interpretation, subtitles, transcription.**
- **Read chat messages before** replying.



Before an online meeting, look for information about accessibility on the platform you will be using.

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Before the meeting:

- Ask which **accessibility resources** are required during enrolment.
- Enable the **required accessibility resources**.
- Choose a location **without architectural barriers**.
- Arrange seats according to needs.

During the meeting:

- **Flag up** available accessibility services.
- **Start speeches** with a brief **audio description**.
- Start speeches without a microphone so that visually impaired people can identify the speaker.
- **Describe** all the images shown.

Aid communication by using easy language and hiring sign language interpretation, audio description and live subtitling (stenotype) services.

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

- Use **simple fonts** without serifs (e.g. Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Verdana).
- Choose font **size 24** for content and font **size 32** (or larger) for titles.
- Use colours with **high contrast** (e.g. white and black).
- Present **little information and few images** per slide.
- Use **easy-to-understand** images.
- Use easy language, with **short sentences** and **everyday words**.
- **Read all slide content and describe images and worksheets.**



Use the accessibility checker when preparing slide presentations.
This tool identifies accessibility issues and suggests solutions.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

- Use simple fonts without serifs (e.g. Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Verdana).
- Choose font **size 12** (or larger).
- Respect the **space between letters and words**.
- DO NOT use condensed fonts.
- Use **1.5 line spacing**.
- Use **short sentences** and **everyday words**.
- **Highlight information** by underlining the sentence or by using icons (DO NOT just change the colour to highlight information).
- Use the word processor **heading levels** feature (DO NOT use only colours or font size to identify title and subtitle).
- Describe the images and tables used throughout the document.
- Use links that describe the content (DO NOT use links like “learn more” and “click here”).
- Use accessible features for screen readers (DO NOT use the text box feature).
- Do not use files where the text has been scanned and presented as an image.

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION IN **CORDEL (BRAZILIAN FOLK LITERATURE)**

To avoid embarrassment
And so you don't discriminate
If you are in doubt
It's best to ask
The person with disability
So there is no disagreement
About their treatment*



Access the complete content
using the QR Code below



*This stanza is from the cordel on accessible communication written
by Edson Oliveira, based on the content of this booklet.

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WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HEALTHCARE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES?

Read the Brazilian Inclusion Law (Law 13,146/2015) and check out our series using the QR codes below:



Accessible
Communication



Educommunication and
healthcare for persons
with disabilities

**Barriers to communication due to disability constitute a violation of the BIL.
If you witness such discrimination, report it by dialling 100 in Brazil.**

