

## Facilitating Understanding of Spoken Language

Lesson 3: Handout  
Communication Assistant Course



Communication Disabilities Access Canada

### Recognizing when a person may not understand

2

There are many ways that a person may demonstrate that they are not understanding. They might:

- Look confused
- Shrug their shoulders
- Get distracted
- Lean forward to hear better
- Not respond to questions
- Answer questions inconsistently
- Answer questions inappropriately

## Recognizing when a person may not understand

3

- Agree with everything that is said
- Get agitated or frustrated
- Move around or act out
- Start up another activity



## Assisting a person to understand what is being said

4

The individual you are assisting may want you to tell the person to:

- Check that they understand
- Speak up but do not shout when talking to them
- Speak more clearly or more slowly
- Face them so that they can see their mouth when speaking



## Assisting a person to understand what is being said

5

- Move to a quiet place so that they can concentrate on what is being said
- Use everyday language
- Use short simple sentences, but not childish language
- Pause between sentences so that they have time to process what is being said
- Avoid terminology, jargon and abbreviations
- Ask if they want more information or have questions
- Ask if they want you to take notes about what is discussed

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## Assisting a person to understand what is being said

6

*If more support is required, the person may want you to:*

- Explain words and concepts that are used
- Rephrase things in ways the person understands
- Relate what is said to the person's life experience
- Show pictures, objects, maps, photographs or diagrams to help them understand
- Ask the person if they want more information
- Ask the person if they have any questions

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