

The following is a transcript of audio segments for slides in this lesson.

Lesson 2.1

In this lesson, you will learn about:

- Different types of Communication Assistants
- Communication assistance in different situations

Slide 2.2 – Types of Communication Assistants

A Communication assistant can be anyone who you trust to assist you communicating. For example, they can be:

1. People who know you very well
2. Independent Communication Assistants
3. Speech-Language Pathologists

Slide 2.3 – People who know you very well

People who know you well are often the best people to provide communication assistance. They can be:

- Family member – a parent, brother, sister or another relative
- Friend -
- Personal Attendant, Personal Support Worker or direct service provider - they might be hired by you to assist you with daily activities – or you might get these services through an agency or a residence where you live.

Slide 2.4

We asked the instructors how they feel about having people who know them well assist with communication.

Slide 2.5

The instructors also point out some cautions when relying on people who know them very well.

Slide 2.6

Independent communication assistants are people who may not know you as well as family or support staff.

They may be people who have some experience supporting people with disabilities and who have some training in communication assistance.

They might be:

- An attendant or personal support worker who supports another person you know who has a communication disability -
- People who have taken CDAC's communication assistance training and have experience supporting people with disabilities in your area
- People who have connections with your communication clinic or a disability organization in your community. We highly recommend that these organizations begin to develop networks of communication support that you can call upon when needed. You may want to suggest that they do this or you may want to start up your own communication network in your area.

Slide 2.7

We asked the instructors what the advantages are for using an independent person to assist with communication.

Slide 2.8

As with everything, there can be challenges using an independent person to assist with communication... especially for people who communicate using pictures and symbols and who can't communicate everything they want to convey. In these situations, an assistant really needs to know the person well in order to be able to assist them communicating with others.

Slide 2.9

There are some critical communication situations where you may need a qualified Speech Language Pathologist or Augmentative Communication Clinician to assist with communication.

For example:

In a hospital setting:

- If you need more help than your communication assistant can give you to understand and communicate about your healthcare treatment or if you need vocabulary to communicate in these situations.
- Or if a healthcare provider questions your ability to make your own decisions
- Or if a healthcare provider questions the ability of your assistant to support you giving your consent to treatment

In a police, legal or justice situation, you may need a Speech language Pathologist or Augmentative Communication Clinician to assist you:

- Report an abuse and a crime to a police officer
- Or If you need to give evidence of testimony in court or at a tribunal
- If you want to discuss private legal matters with a lawyer

In these situations you can request or the professional may bring in a Speech Language Pathologist or an AAC clinician to assist with communication.

Slide 2.11 – Things to think about and discuss

Who do you have to assist with communication – in your familiar circle of assistants; independent assistants and speech language pathology assistant circles?

Who would you want to assist you?

- At a dentist appointment
- At a community meeting about making a local park accessible
- In a hospital
- At a meeting a lawyer about your power of attorney
- Making a complaint about a service provider

Are you pleased with how the assistance they give you?

Do you want to increase the number of assistants you have?