



Consider Frustration

- Does the person often seem upset?
- Do you get frustrated with the person?
- Do other people get frustrated with the person?
- Is communication part of the problem?



Is there a problem with the person's level of frustration and/or challenging behavior? Sometimes, using a more robust system of communication can help. **More effective ways to communicate can reduce frustration and build a stronger connection.**

If someone cannot communicate, the world may ignore them. We observe this when someone speaks a different language than the larger community. The interpreter gets most of the attention and interaction. The same thing happens when someone has never learned a robust communication system.

If someone talks but not clearly, frustration can mount. Not only does the speaker get frustrated, but the listener does as well. When frustration mounts, there is an interruption in connection and interaction. A better communication system can be helpful for everyone.

When the person shows frustration, we interpret it as "challenging behavior". We work to stop or extinguish the behavior. We know that we don't want to reward challenging behavior. What was the person trying to say? What was the message behind the challenging behavior. In the long run, a better way to communicate might help.

Is challenging behavior a reason not provide an AAC device? In a word—No.

Actually, behaviors can improve when someone learns a way to say what they need. If there is a concern that a device might get broken or destroyed, a military grade case might help. Maybe start with a light tech option. Maybe pair the device with a preferred person.

Moving to a more robust system is not a magic bullet, but can be part of a solution.