Get Yourself Active

@GetYrselfActive

Social Care
Activity Pack

How to have conversations about physical activity

SPORT ENGLAND

Disability Rights UK

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Conversations are key to supporting people to be more active. But it can be difficult to know where to start, especially when sometimes people may not be interested in physical activity or not feel like it is for them.

We have put together some techniques you can use to start to engage people in conversations about physical activity. We also have included resources and worksheets that you can use to help you to have these conversations.

Later in the pack we have more tips and practical advice for how you can support people to take part in physical activity, such as how to include physical activity in support plans and setting goals.

The guidance below is developed by Sport for Confidence and explains an easy-to-follow way of starting to have conversations about physical activity.

Starting the Conversation: Staying Well & Being Active

Ask
Ask people about how they normally spend their time –
What is a typical day like? Are weekends and weekdays different?
How do they feel about how they spend their time?

Listen
Find out what matters to them –
What activities are important to you?
What do you need and want to do in your life?

Reflect
These questions are really important – they help you find out about that individual person and what matters to them.

Learn
Explain to people why being active is important – Having a good mix and balance of things to do in our daily lives can reduce the chance of us developing some health conditions and keep us well. Being active improves our health and can make us feel better. Being active doesn't have to mean sport and physical activity, it can include everyday things, like walking and gardening.

Reflect
Link back what people have already told you about what they do or want to do – give examples based on what they have told you they enjoy/want to do.

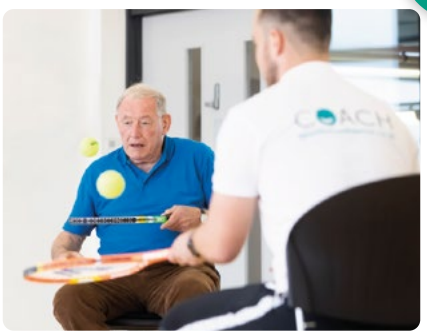
Explore
If people aren't doing much physical activity in their daily lives it can help them keep healthy and feel better to do a bit more, but be sensitive and make sure you don't make them feel bad about what they are doing – this could reduce motivation even more. Doing more is often best done gradually – in small steps. Also, suggest they try doing things they are currently doing in different ways (like walking at different speeds or to different places).

Reflect
Explore how doing physical activity has impacted on their life in a positive way previously/currently.

Collaborate
Once you have found out about the person, what they need and want to do, and built a relationship with them, you can ask if they would like to set goals around being active. They might want to do this or they might not. Remember to think about what matters to and motivates them.

Reflect
Give examples of non-physical goals, for example how doing things differently in their everyday life might also build social skills and self-esteem.

Plan
When discussing and agreeing goals remember to be realistic and fully explore what options are available to the person. You will need to discuss things such as their environment (what is their housing situation like? Do they have outdoor space? Do they live with other people? Are they able to mobilise and travel independently? Is the cost of some physical activity sessions a barrier? Is there an identified risk or health need to consider?) There are lots of things to think about and explore and this may take some time. Just one thing going wrong or not being considered can stop someone being active.



Support
There are many organisations that can offer support and signposting. Consider: Does the person have access to the internet? There are live classes, activities and lots of further information about activity, health and wellbeing at: **www.activeessex.org** and **www.sportforconfidence.com**. Using Outdoor space for activities (remaining compliant with guidelines) eg: walking, jogging, running, cycling. Clubs and groups might not be on at the moment, but most are still happy to talk about what they offer and what to expect when they return. If no internet access, and a postal address is provided please share offline resources for physical activity ideas. Or email **administration@activeessex.org** for further information.

Celebrate
Celebrate achievements (however small they seem – managing to do the same as last week is still an achievement!)

SPORT FOR CONFIDENCE

Active Essex
activeessex.org

Play Your Part™
sportforconfidence.com

Motivational interviewing

Motivational interviewing can be used as a way of having conversations with the people you support who may, for many reasons be unmotivated by the idea of physical activity.

You may already be doing a lot of this in your practice, but reading through some of these techniques could help you have conversations about getting active.

What is motivational interviewing?

Motivational interviewing is all about having more effective conversations to help guide people to change. Having these conversations can help to shape a person's attitudes and behaviours and can set a course of action to keep people going.

However, conversations are not about telling people what to do. Motivational interviewing is a collaborative conversation style for supporting a person's own motivation and addressing change.

How do I use motivational interviewing techniques in my discussions?

You can begin by talking to the people you support about their thoughts around getting active with some gentle exploration of why physical activity is or is not important to a person.

Motivational interviewing requires good listening skills. You will need to listen to what is being told to you and try to understand, rather than to convince them to change. This does not mean that you can't provide information or practical advice. Instead you can use suggestions that the person you are speaking to can choose to accept or not: E.g. "Would it be OK if I say something about what has helped other people in the same situation?"

What can help you is by remembering the world 'Rule'

R **Resist** telling people what to do: Avoid telling, directing or convincing.

U **Understand** a person's motivation: Understand their values, needs, motivations and potential barriers to changing behaviours.

L **Listen** with empathy

E **Empower** people: Work to set achievable goals and to identify techniques to overcome barriers

There are also four stages that can help you to guide the conversation:

Stage 1 Engaging

Stage 1 is engaging with the person. This is all about building a helpful connection. It is worth checking if the person you are supporting feels comfortable talking to you about physical activity. If they don't, you could work together with someone they may feel more comfortable with e.g. a family member. It is also helpful to reflect on whether you are being supportive towards them.

Stage 2 Focusing

Stage 2 is focusing. This is where you investigate what goals for change this person has and that you have a clear sense of the direction of the conversation. You need to make sure you are working together, not going in different directions.

Stage 3 Evoking

Stage 3 is evoking. This is about looking into the person's motivations for change. Look into what their own reasons are for change, and why they may be reluctant. This is where you can start to create a vision with them around where they may want to be in the future.

Stage 4 Planning

Stage 4 is planning. This is all about creating a concrete plan of action for change. Think about what would help the person to move forward, and what a reasonable next step could be that could help them towards change. Think about how to connect them to things that can help, such as personal, family and community sources of support that may be available.

Active listening

Active listening means not only hearing what the person is saying, but fully concentrating on what is being said, reading body language and showing interest by using verbal and non-verbal cues like nodding. Through active listening you can gain an understanding of the persons own view of their situation as well as their values.

Open questions

An open question is a question that cannot be answered with a 'yes or a 'no' answer, and instead means people have an opportunity to talk or explain their answer. They usually begin with words such as "When?", "Where?", "How?" or "What?".

Here are a few examples of relevant open questions that you could try:

- "How do you feel about being more active?"
- "What activities have you enjoyed in the past? What activities do you think you might find fun and enjoyable?"
- "Where would you like to be active, and who with?"
- "What are the things you could do to make some steps towards/changes to becoming more physically active?"

Summarising

Summarising is a way of pulling together what a person has told you and reflecting this back to them in a few sentences. This shows that you are listening and understanding what they are saying.

Summarising back to someone can help them to reflect on what they are speaking about which may encourage them to open up more.

Scale questions

Scale questions can be used to get people talking about motivation and the importance of change. This means asking a person to 'rate' where they are on a scale of 0 to 10. Here is an example:

"Think of a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that it's not important at all and 10 means that it's very important. How would you rate your view of physical activity on such a scale?"

Personalisation and physical activity

‘Personalisation’ is about people having choice and control over their lives.

If people are able to make more informed decisions about things that are important to them, they will feel more independent and in charge of their own lives. This means a person should receive support that is tailored to their individual needs, wishes, and goals.

A regular physical activity habit can help to increase confidence and independence as well as reduce loneliness and isolation. These outcomes all make a crucial contribution to creating independence and self-efficacy. Understanding the role of physical activity in personalisation helps to show the link between what is important to someone with being active and moving more.

For example, someone feels lonely and needs more human contact, arranging a regular walk with a neighbour or friend will help them to feel less lonely. The focus here is about reducing their loneliness with the important added benefit of getting active.

Having conversations with individuals and working with them to identify what is important to them or what they want to achieve can help. Understanding individual interests and abilities, previous successful physical activity experiences and personal beliefs and expectations can all be helpful when trying to find suitable activities.

You can document this in their support plan, alongside the individual’s medical conditions and the views of other health, therapy, and social care professionals.

AGATHA CHRISTIE
THE PLYMOUTH EXPRESS

Below are some examples of some individual outcomes and how physical activity can be linked to these outcomes.

I would like to make new friends

Joining a local group at a sports centre, or going on an arranged group walk, can be a great way to meet new people.

I want to improve my communication skills

Taking part in a team sport can help to improve an individual's ability to communicate as they work together with others.

I want to better manage my pain relief

Moving more frequently can often help people to manage their pain, and may help to reduce chronic pain.

I want to do something I enjoy

If you find a physical activity you enjoy doing, it can help you to stay active in the longer term. It can also give you something to do in your spare time and help to give you a purpose/sense of worth.

On the following pages are some worksheets you can use with the person/people you support that could be the first steps in having conversations about physical activity.

Let's Get Active physical activity worksheet:

Use this worksheet to help to guide you through a conversation about being active.

Change plan worksheet:

This worksheet can help you and the person you support look at the pro's and cons of being active, as well as starting to look at ways to make the change to be more active.

Wellbeing plan:

The wellbeing plan is taken from the **Get Yourself Active Social worker guidelines**. It can help you to guide you through a conversation about how physical activity can benefit different areas of life.

Physical activity worksheet

Let's get active!

Name:

Date:

1) Do you have any goals for the future?

2) How often are you active at the moment?

3) Would you like to be more active? Why is that case/not the case?

4) If you are active, what types of physical activity do you currently enjoy doing? If you aren't active, is there any physical activities you think you might like?

Physical activity worksheet

Let's get active!

5) What are the benefits of you getting more active?

6) What resources are available that can help you to get more active? (equipment, gym, local clubs, funding)

7) What barriers might you face? (e.g. lack of motivation, support)

8) How could you overcome these barriers?

Change plan worksheet

Pro's and cons of getting active

The effect on my physical health	
If I start to get active	If I don't move much

The effect on my mental health	
If I start to get active	If I don't move much

Change plan worksheet

1. The changes I want to make are:

2. The most important reasons why I want to make these changes are:

3. The steps I plan to take in making these changes are:

4. The ways other people can help me are:

Person	Possible ways to help me

5. I will know that my plan is working if:

6. Some things that could interfere with my plans are:

7. How important is it that you make this change:

Not at all important	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Most important

8. How confident are you that you can make this change:

Wellbeing

What do you think about your current health? Is it better or worse than usual? How do you feel emotionally?

What's working well?

How could physical activity improve your wellbeing?

If you could give a score for how you feel about your current health (physical, mental and emotional), what would it be?

(1 = poor and 5 = very good)

1 2 3 4 5

Day-to-day life

What do you think about your current life in terms of choosing what you want to do, when you want to do it?

What's working well?

How could physical activity improve your day-to-day life?

If you could give a score for how you feel about your current health (physical, mental and emotional), what would it be?

(1 = poor and 5 = very good)

1 2 3 4 5

Work, volunteering and interests

If you can't work, are there other opportunities you would like to do? to 'Would you like to do any activities or volunteer?

What's working well?

What opportunities could sport or physical provide to help you achieve your goals?

If you could give a score for how you feel about your current health (physical, mental and emotional), what would it be?

(1 = poor and 5 = very good)

1 2 3 4 5

Communicating with people with complex disabilities

You may be supporting people with complex disabilities, which means that having a verbal conversation might not be the best form of communicating about getting active. However, there are a range of ways you can communicate to find out someone's interests, goals and what may work best for the individual when it comes to getting physically active.

We realise many of the techniques in this section may be a key part of your existing practice. However, it can be useful to start to think about how some of what you already do can help you and the person you support communicate about physical activity.

There are ways that you can have conversations with the people you support about physical activity. If they cannot communicate verbally, you can usually get a sense of how they feel about an activity through:

- Body language (e.g. turning face away)
- Gesture (e.g. pointing.)
- Vocalisations (e.g. crying)
- Facial expressions (e.g. smiling or frowning)

Conversations about physical activity

Here are some other techniques that can help you to have conversations about physical activity

1

Using signs/Makaton

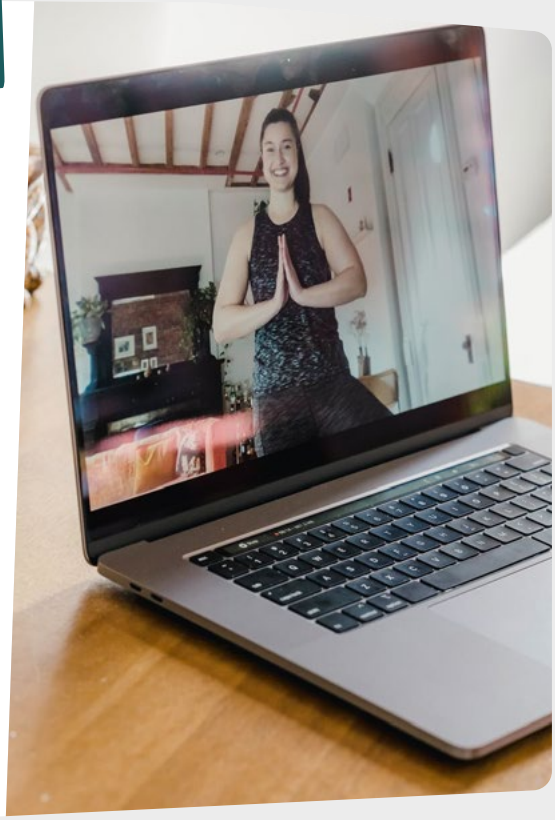
Some people may not be able to verbally communicate but they can tell you what they are thinking or feeling through sign language such as Makaton. You could work with the person you are supporting to teach them the signs for certain physical activities, which can help you to find out what they are interested in. **Makaton.org** have a variety of resources you can download to help.

2

Using technology to help someone communicate

Technology can help people with complex disabilities to express themselves, to be understood by others, and to make choices.

From hearing devices, low vision aids, lighting systems, GPS systems and specialist communication software, to apps and Braille devices, technology can help remove barriers to communication, accessing information and mobility. Technology can be used to help people to communicate their preferences around physical activity. For example, they could use BIGmack, where someone can touch a button to communicate or make choices.



3

Using objects to communicate

Using objects could also be a way of helping someone to make choices and to express what they are interested in, or to prepare someone for taking part in a particular activity.

You may need to relate the object to what you're talking about first – e.g. showing them a football and getting them to touch this whenever they are involved in playing football. You could also present a choice of objects for example a ball, swimming goggles and a racket. They could then make a choice from the objects presented to indicate what activity they want to do.

4

Using pictures, symbols, and photos

Some people can also use pictures or symbols to make choices or say what they want. For example, they could use pictures on a mat to see what is happening that day. Pictures and symbols can also be used to help someone choose things that they want or to help someone say how they feel.

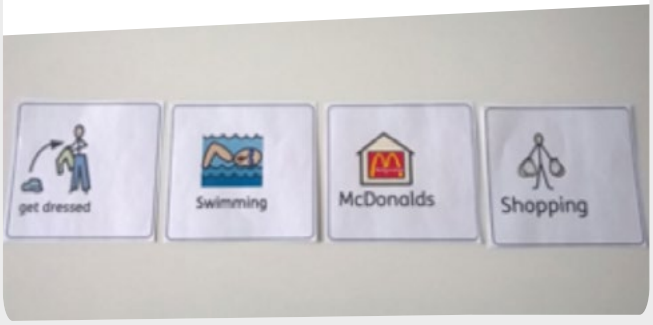
5

Calendar Systems

It can also be useful to have a 'calendar system' when working with people with complex disabilities. This is a way of supporting a person to understand and plan for events, which can involve planning to incorporate physical activity as part of a daily routine.

Calendar systems can take the form of objects, pictures, photographs, words, smells or a combination of all.

They can be used to aid understanding on what is happening in an activity and what comes next. Sequencing of information can help reduced anxiety by explaining explain now, next and later and help people to be prepared for what activity they might be involved in.

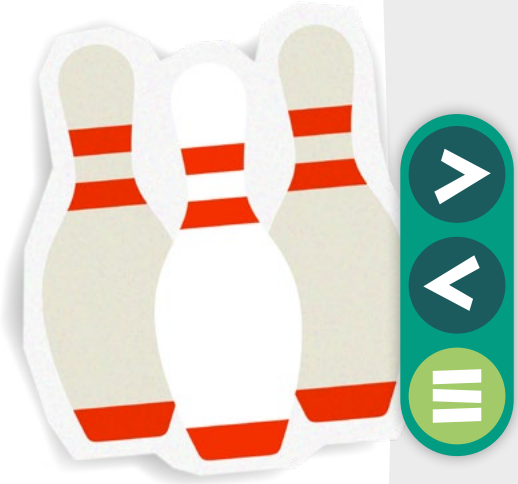


Jess and Chris go bowling

Case Study

Jess and Chris live in a Sense residential home. They are both deafblind, with complex disabilities, and enjoy going bowling. Jess and Chris have been bowling before, but due to their complex disabilities, it was challenging for staff to explain that they were going bowling or ask them whether they wanted to go.

The staff asked the local bowling alley if they had an old bowling ball they could donate to the residential home. This bowling ball is now used as an object of reference to explain to Jess and Chris that they are about to go bowling and allow them the opportunity to decide if they want to go.



Prior to going bowling, staff present Jess and Chris with a seatbelt, which they feel and explore with their hands. The feeling mimics that of going out in the minibus, therefore indicating to them that they are going out on a trip. Staff then present the bowling ball, which through its smooth texture and small holes, they recognise, and associate with their previous trips to the bowling alley. In this way, staff have communicated in a tactile way with Jess and Chris, which helps them with anticipating where they are going, and what activity they are about to do.

It is important that the object of reference has meaning to the individual using it. Many individuals who have the capacity to do so, will select their own object of reference which holds significance for them in relation to a specific activity. For Jess and Chris, their complex disabilities mean a physical, tactile object (the bowling ball) resonates with them, as they make sense of the world around them primarily through touch. Some individuals may also present their object of reference to indicate an activity they wish to take part in.

Use the following worksheet as a way to introduce the people you support to different physical activities and assess how they feel about each one. Work with the person you support to match the name with the picture.

Tennis

Bowling

Swimming

Cycling

Running

Football

Basketball

Skipping