

Learning to be a Facilitator

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1. Understand that facilitators are learners too.
2. Assemble a team to support you in your efforts to learn.
3. Examine attitudes and beliefs which you hold regarding individuals with autism.
4. Examine how attitudes and beliefs affect your interactions.
5. Practice sharing information with an individual with autism without demanding indicators of attention. Have interactions without asking questions or giving instructions.
6. Share information at a more sophisticated level: provide details; express opinions; tell about yourself.
7. Explain your changing perception of autism. Express your desire to learn to be a facilitator.
8. Read something to the individual which you think may be of interest.
9. Enhance the person's image in front of others. Express confidence in the person's abilities.
10. Practice facilitation with family, friends, or colleagues.
11. Make a communication book for yourself. Practice using it with family, friends or colleagues.
12. Carry pen and paper to write choices to offer; use facilitation to find out preferences. Ask if you could practice by typing out the choice made from the word list.
13. Begin to use facilitation to offer choices to the individual. Incorporate use of communication book during conversation or reading aloud. (Eg.: "What do you think of that?" "Do you want me to continue?")
14. During conversation or reading, write down key words or phrases which are interesting; practice "copy typing" while facilitating.

15. Thank individual for helping you learn to facilitate.
16. Facilitate for individuals to participate in a table game with others (eg., Scrabble, checkers, Jeopardy).
17. As your abilities and confidence increase, begin to offer choices verbally and ask the individual to type his/her preference.
18. Accept some responsibility for mistakes or unintelligible answers. Express confidence that you will be able to learn to facilitate better with practice.
19. When you feel ready, offer to facilitate without asking any question or ask the individual if there is anything s/he would like to say. If the message is unintelligible, ask if s/he wants to continue to try, ask if s/he can name the topic to help your understanding.
20. Keep trying and move at your own speed.