Picture Supported Assessment Tool

ViewPOINT

The PicSAT (Picture Supported Assessment Tool) has been developed to increase the capacity of young people with communication difficulties to communicate effectively about things that matter to them. It can be used to screen groups of young people and identify those with specific wellbeing needs.

The resource enables young people with communication difficulties, to be genuinely included in planning the steps required to bring about positive change in their lives.

PicSAT has been developed in partnership with Talking Mats speech and language therapists at Stirling University, Scotland

Talking Mats is a communication framework with a strong evidence base which shows it improves the quality and quantity of information a person with communication difficulty shares.

PicSAT supports comprehension and communication by:

+ including pictures that focus on the meaning to be communicated so that the image is a scaffold to understanding
+ removing unnecessary visual detail so reducing memory demands
+ ensuring pictures are as neutral as possible, and not construed as leading
+ using multiple channels: visual, auditory and touch
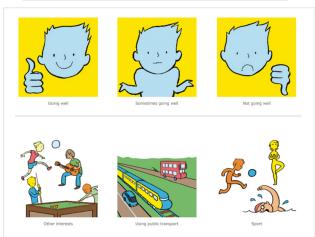+ allowing young people to process information and respond in their own time

PicSAT provides practitioners with a practice framework structured to engage young people by keeping the cognitive load for them as low as possible.

The quality of the information shared by young people is improved by:

+ the young person having control as they work through the questions
+ providing a structured framework for conversations
+ giving young people time
+ helping young people to say 'no'

Questions and responses are automatically spoken and highlighted when a page opens
Responses are selected by tapping on a picture response
Responses are immediately displayed on the device in both 'mat' and 'wellbeing web' formats

The **'Mat report'** displays the question picture below the chosen response option.

The visual images developed by Talking Mats have been shown to be effective: **at a development level where a person uses language in relation to concrete objects** but can explore objects using describing words, for example 'show me the yellow fruit', and also **at a comprehension level of two Information Carrying Words,** for example 'show me the phone and the pen'.