




Walsall Speech and Language Therapy Team



Objects of Reference

What is an Object of Reference?

An Object of Reference is simply an object that stands for or names a certain place, activity, event or person. Below is a list of examples:

Object of Reference	Meaning
 Spoon	Dinner time
 Part of a seat belt	Bus or car
 Bracelet	Staff member or carer

Who uses Objects of Reference?

Objects of Reference are used with a wide range of people who need extra clues about what will happen next.

Why use Objects of Reference?

- Objects of Reference are useful because we can hold, smell and touch them.
- Objects of Reference are related to the activity / person/ place which means it can help the service user guess.
- The objects used are chosen to suit the person's likes and experiences.

Choosing the right object

1. Firstly, choose what the object of reference is going to be for; e.g. are they to help the service user with their daily routines or is it to help them with the people they meet.
2. For each message pick an object that is specific for the service user.
3. Before the activity is carried out or the person approaches give the object to the service user.
4. Encourage the service user to feel and explore the object.
5. Tell the service user what the object means e.g. "it's dinner time.... Can you hold the spoon for dinner time?"
6. As soon as the service user has explored the object introduce the activity or person.

Tips

Always use the same object for a specific message. If it gets lost, get an exact copy.