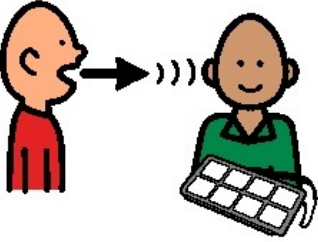# What is this about?

	This guide helps you work with people who need special communication tools, called AAC.
AAC User	People who use these tools are often called AAC users.
	It might seem hard to talk to or include AAC users if you're not used to it.
	But it doesn't have to be hard.

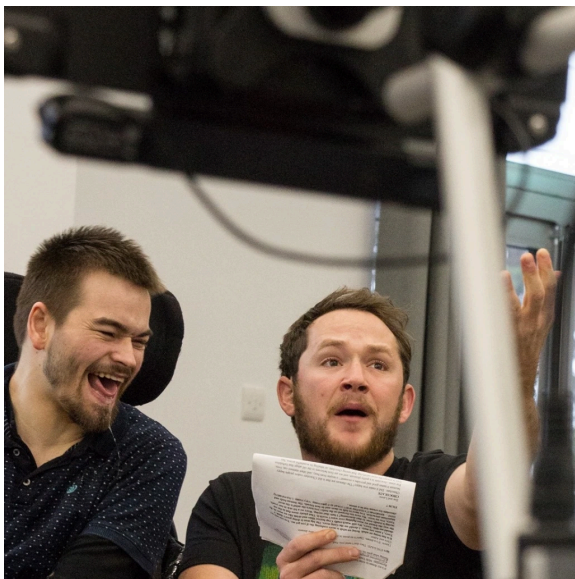|	
	There are many ways to include AAC users in conversations and activities.
	This guide wants to make it easier for you.
	AAC users have different needs.
	Always ask them what they need.

	Don't think this guide tells you everything.

Who wrote this guide?

	This guide is written by Dave Young
	Dave writes poems and tells stories

	….and makes music
	He makes theatre open to everyone

	He uses art to help people share their stories
	He wants to make the world more welcoming
 AAC User	He uses AAC to communicate
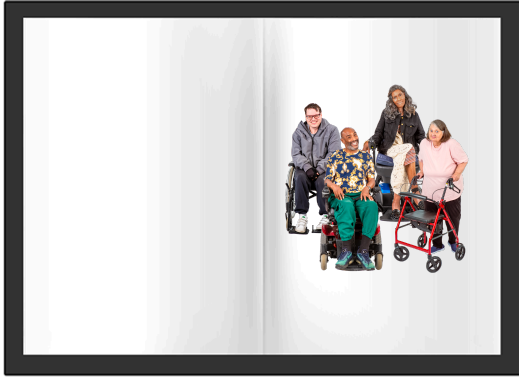
	He runs two businesses and manages his care
	Many AAC users are busy so might not answer messages quickly!

Communication Aids

	AAC users use things called "communication aids".
	These help them talk to others.
	There are two types: high-tech and low-tech.

High Tech Communication Aids

	A high-tech communication aid is electronic, like a tablet or laptop.
	Users control these with touchscreens, eye gaze, scanning, and more.

Controlling high-tech communication aids

	You can control high-tech communication aids in many ways.
	Some use a keyboard, mouse, or touchscreen.
	There are other ways like eye gaze, scanning, and special buttons.

	These technologies make it easier to use a computer.
	It's not as complicated as it sounds.

Controlling low-tech communication aids

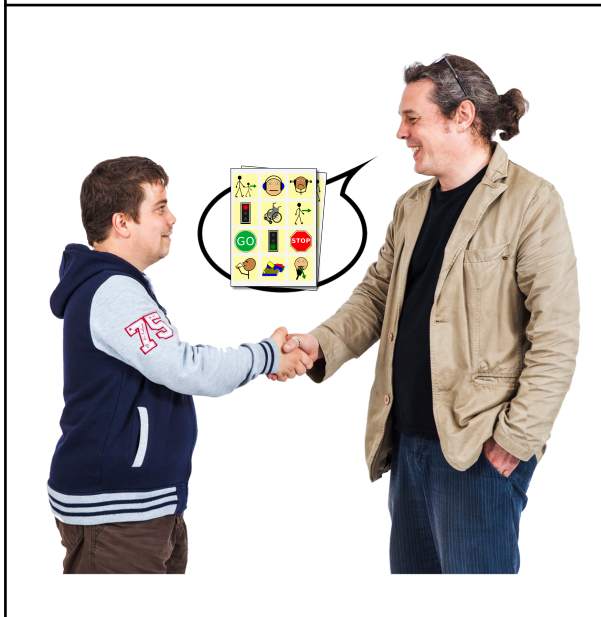|	
	Low-tech aids are things like signs, symbols, or gestures.
	People use these for quick messages.
Yes	You might see a nod or a specific gesture. For "yes" or "no," people might nod, smile, or use a symbol.

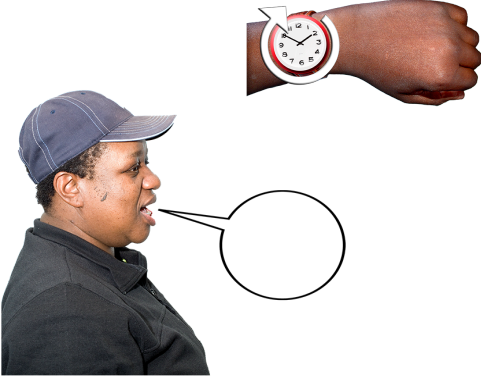| | If you're working with someone who uses these aids, just ask them about it. |
| | It's good to know what aids people use. |
| | If you want to know you can ask them |

Engaging communication aid users

	Include communication aid users in activities and talks.
	It can take them longer to get ready to speak.

	Here are ways to help them join in:
	- Give them questions or topics before the activity.
	- Give them time to answer questions
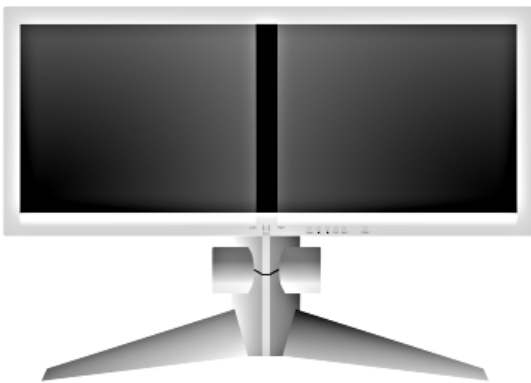
	● Always ask them last before changing the subject.
	● Know how they say "yes" and "no"

Working remotely with communication aid users

	On video calls they might need two screens

	One is to talk and one is for the call.
	Calls can be slow
	Learn how they say "yes" and "no" online

	Don't be surprised if you see their assistant appear on screen to help them

Emailing Communication Aid Users

	Most communication aid users can email using their devices.

	Their emails might look different because of how they type.
	This doesn't mean they're not smart.
	Some find reading hard.

	Use simple documents.
	Voice messages can be easier than long texts.

Other access needs

	People with AAC might use wheelchairs or other aids.

	They need places with wheelchair access
	They might need Changing Places toilets
	They might need lots of power outlets to charge devices and wheelchairs
	Ask them what they need before you choose a venue

	AAC users often need an assistant who knows a lot about their needs.
	This assistant gets paid between £13 and £16, depending on what they know and can do.
	Talk to the AAC user about the costs and who is paying for them

	If you are arranging travel or hotels talk to them about what they need

Universal Accessibility

	Universal design means making things that work for everyone.

	It's used by people who make buildings, services, and products.
	The goal is to include as many people as possible
	When making something, the idea is to make it work for everyone

	You will need to know peoples needs to do this

Warm ups and body work

	Think about the words you use when doing warm-ups

	Ask people to think about body parts instead of stretches
	Ask people to move in the ways that work for them
	Understand the limits everyone has

Warm ups and voice

|	
	Many AAC users can make sounds or say a few words.
	They might express emotions with sounds like roars or words like "mum."
	Use these in voice warm-ups

| | Support people to use their voices creatively |

Moving around the space

| | Trust people to control their wheelchairs safely |

	Some people need to be pushed in wheelchairs
	Make sure they are deciding which way to go

Adapting Games for People with Limited Movement
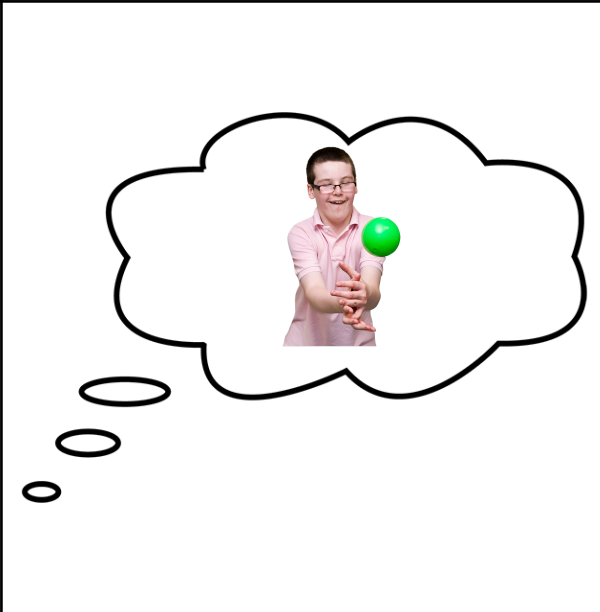
	Think about what you want the game to achieve
	Talk to the AAC user about how to adapt the game
	Make sure they understand how to play
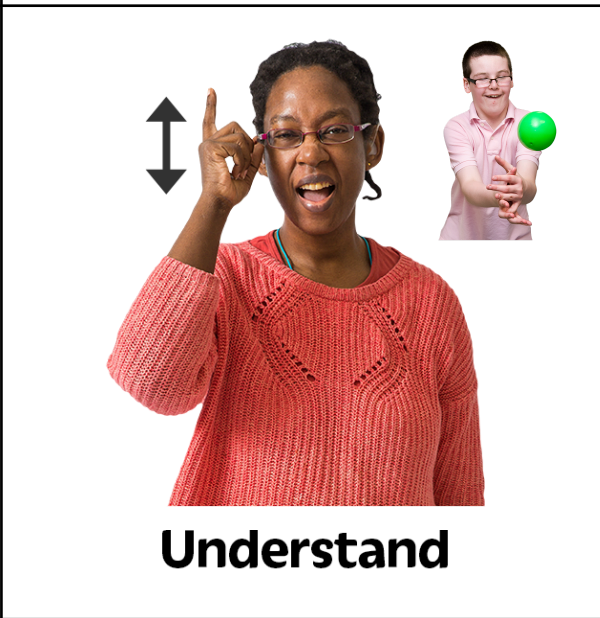
Zip Zap Boing

	Zip Zap Boing is a fun game
	People point at each other and say zip, zap, or boing

	People can use their hands instead of words
	People can also use their communication aids
	The important thing is that everyone is joining in

Acting

	Lots of actors use AAC to perform different roles
	They can play any role. Think about why they're in the play.
	You can copy the AAC users voice using a computer
	You can make lots of different sounds using an AAC device - which can be a lot of fun

	They can use their communication aid on stage
	Another actor can speak for them

Music

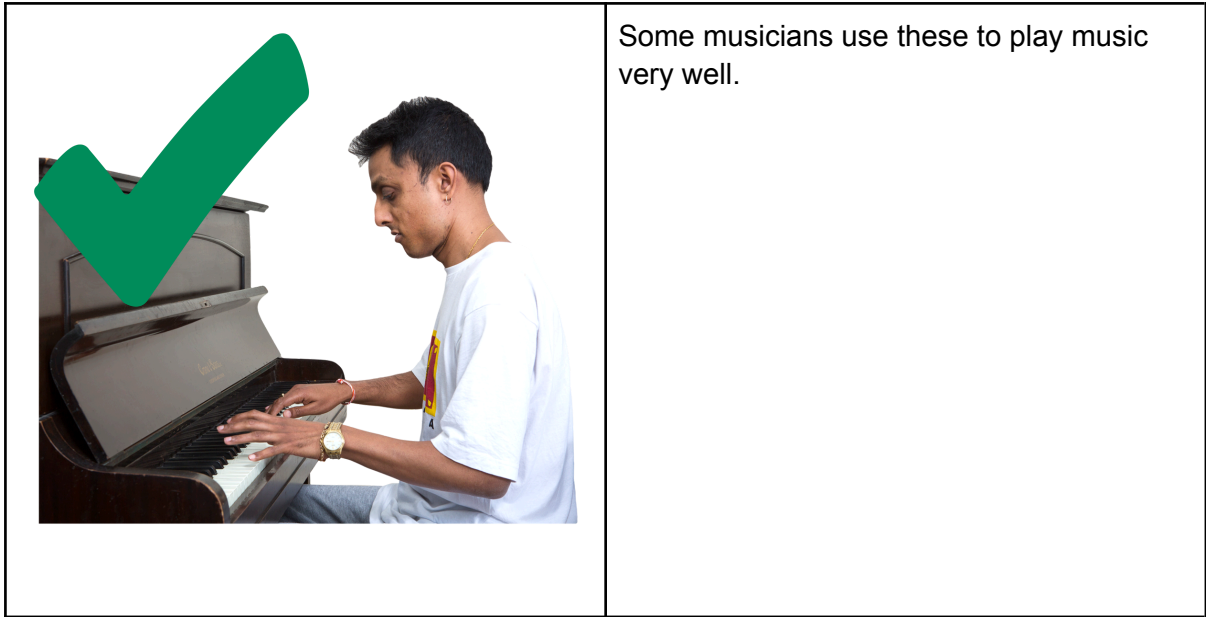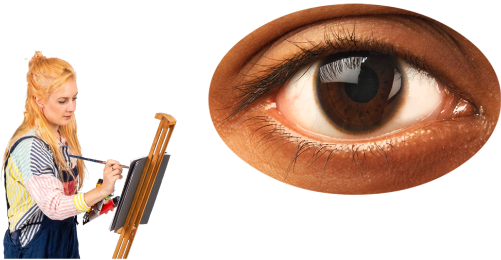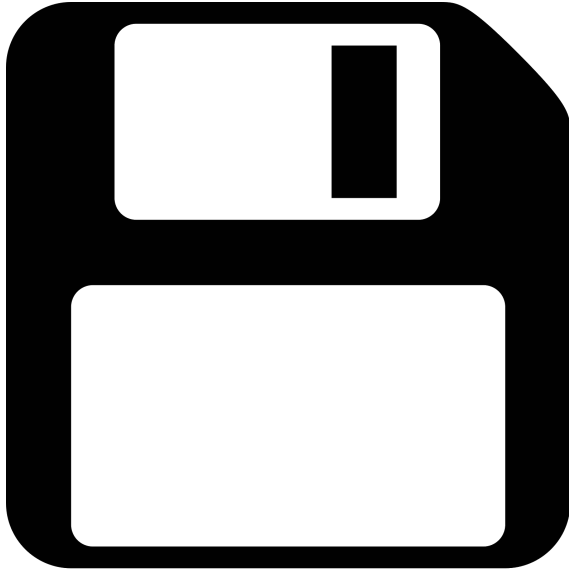|	
	Lots of people who use aac make music.
AAC User	AAC users can play musical instruments using special apps like "Clarion" or "Eyeharp."
	These apps let people play music with their eyes.

| | Some musicians use these to play music very well. |

Visual Art:

| | People who use communication aids can draw. |

	They can control the brush by looking, and making shapes
	With practice, you can use Paint or Photoshop this way

Creative Writing:

	If you can talk using an AAC device, you and write too
AAC User	

	Most AAC software lets you save sentences.
	You can use programmes like Microsoft Word or Google Docs
	Start writing in the way that feels best for you.

Performing on Camera and Film:

	Film sets are busy. But they should be easy for wheelchair users to move around
	They may need adapted toilets

	Make sure people are happy with the way they are shown!

AAC User | Show how AAC users really communicate |
| | Make sure they are part of the story |

	AAC users can use software like iMovie to edit films
	Even if a professional film, make sure everyone is included in the edit.