

Talking Mats



What are Talking Mats?

Developed from a research project by Joan Murphy (1998), Talking Mats has become a well-researched communication tool. It involves a 'talking mat' (which looks like a car mat) that allows Velcro Symbols to be placed on it.

The aim is to facilitate a topic of discussion using picture cards and the mat. For example, if you wanted to try to find out about a person's preferential activities, you would place the topic at the top of the mat and then offer 2 choices, either "Yes" and "No" or "I like" and "I don't like". Some people also have a 3rd "maybe" or "not sure" option.

Talking Mats have launched their new digital resources available for the iPad. For information on versions you can download, click [here](#)

Why use Talking Mats?

Talking Mats are used to facilitate topics of discussion. They can help people with communication difficulties have a greater understanding about a chosen topic. It can increase engagement and can enable them to make informed choices. With such a versatile resource, the options are endless. Some of the many topics of discussion we have facilitated using Talking Mats are:

- Food choices and preferences;
- Care plans, including what a client wanted from his new home;
- Behaviour and what behaviour is liked/disliked within a setting (school/home);
- Activity likes/dislikes;
- Sensory preferences;
- AND much more!

Who can benefit from Talking Mats?

Almost anyone with communication difficulties can use Talking Mats. The resource allows people to think about information in small chunks and to organise their thoughts. We use it with many clients who have:

- A range of Speech, Language and Communication needs;
- Learning Disability;
- Dementia;
- Aphasia;
- Autism;
- Acquired Brain Injury.

Who can deliver Talking Mats?

A wide range of educational and health professionals can deliver the Talking Mats approach, following training by a Speech and Language Therapist.

Evidence for Talking Mats

The Talking Mats approach has not been formally investigated and, therefore, there is limited evidence available.

References

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Murphy, J, Gray, C. M. & Cox, S. (2007). The use of Talking Mats as a communication resource to improve communication and quality care for people with dementia. *Journal of Housing, Care and Support*, 10(3), 21-27.