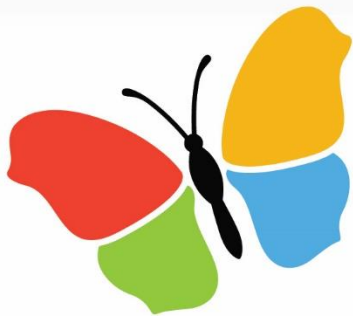


# Facilitator's Guide



## Take Flight

Empowering educators and  
equipping learners with ASD to soar



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## Functions of Communication

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### Functions of Communication

After viewing the video, **Functions of Communication**, complete the activities below. You may review the video as necessary to answer the questions and to complete the practice activities.

#### Activity 1: Reflection Questions

1. What are some of the purposes of communication?
2. What are some reasons why communication may be challenging for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder?
3. One way to think about communication is in terms of receptive language and expressive language. Explain what each of these terms means, and give at least 2 examples of each.
4. Another way to think about communication is in terms of the different functions that communication can serve. Some of those functions include:
  - Requesting
  - Labeling
  - Imitating
  - Responding as a speaker
  - Responding as a listener

For each of the functions listed above, explain the function in your own words, and give one example of each based on your own work context or experience.

#### Activity 2: Putting the Pieces Together

Imagine that you have been asked to take all of the information in the Functions of Communication video and create a 1-page poster/brochure that summarizes all of the key points using text and/or graphics. This brochure will be used throughout your school, region, board, and/or district as a professional learning tool for educational staff. Design your poster/brochure and present your creation to your group.



## ANSWER KEY

### 1. Purposes of communication:

- Sharing attention with another person
- A social exchange - a give and take - where we are focused on the same things together, taking turns as listeners and speakers
- Talking about things that are happening right now, things that happened in the past, or things that we expect or wish to happen in the future
- Asking for help, sharing information, expressing our feelings, or telling a joke
- May include gestures, facial expressions, and body posture

### 2. Reasons why communication may be challenging for individuals with ASD:

- Learners with ASD may not understand that using language is useful for a range of purposes, including getting what they need or want, but also maintaining relationships between people.
- Individuals with ASD don't always understand the social aspects of communication, that communication involves "give and take," and that there are many nonverbal and social cues involved in the exchanges that make up communication.

### 3. Receptive and expressing language:

- Receptive language is about understanding what is being communicated by someone else. Sometimes this type of communication requires the individual to make some type of response. The listener has to understand what the speaker says and means, and has to respond accordingly.
- Expressive communication, on the other hand, involves "output." It involves using words and sentences to express our needs, wants, thoughts, ideas, and opinions in ways that other people can understand. Expressive communication also includes the facial expressions, gestures, and other body language and non-verbal cues that we use to convey our messages.
- Examples for both of these will vary



## ANSWER KEY

### 4. Functions of communication:

- Requesting: asking in an acceptable way for something one wants or needs; protesting in an acceptable way
- Labeling: naming something that is present in the environment and that can be perceived through the senses (seen, heard, smelled, touched, tasted)
- Imitating: observing what someone else does and copying the same action
- Responding as a speaker: listening to and understanding what someone else says and responding with language in a way that is relevant and appropriate
- Responding as a listener: listening to and understanding what someone else says and responding with an action that is relevant and appropriate
- Examples will vary





The Autism in Education (AIE) Partnership is an inter-provincial collaboration of the Departments of Education & Early Childhood Development / Early Learning & Culture of the four Atlantic Provinces. Created as an initiative of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) in 2010, the AIE Partnership provides support to educational personnel working with students with ASD across the Atlantic region and facilitates the sharing of information and expertise among stakeholders. Priorities of the AIE Partnership include:

- Research to clarify and articulate standards of practice in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dissemination of information and current research on issues of concern among the four Atlantic Provinces
- Professional development and learning opportunities for educational staff, partner professionals, and families



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