

NEUROCLASTIC.COM

TAKE 5

APPROACH

FOR SAFE COMMUNICATION

A TRAUMA-INFORMED THERAPEUTIC
AVENUE FOR EMPOWERING CLIENTS TO
SELF-ADVOCATE

TALKING ABOUT IT IS HARD...

TAKE 5



I would like to sit in silence for a moment to process my thoughts.



I would like to hear advice or insights but do not want to reply.



I would like to use my AAC device or write my thoughts on paper.



I would like to access the stim and fidget box.



I need to take a break. I'll let you know when I'm ready.



THE TAKE 5 APPROACH

1

I WOULD LIKE TO SIT IN SILENCE A MOMENT TO PROCESS MY THOUGHTS.

2

I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ADVICE OR INSIGHTS BUT DO NOT WANT TO REPLY.

3

I WOULD LIKE TO USE MY AAC DEVICE OR WRITE MY THOUGHTS ON PAPER.

4

I WOULD LIKE TO ACCESS THE STIM AND FIDGET BOX.

5

I NEED TO TAKE A BREAK. I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I'M READY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

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THOUGHTFUL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM FOR EDUCATORS, PROVIDERS, & FAMILIES

A trauma-informed approach to foster
communication choice, self-advocacy, &
client empowerment

1. Clients may be ready to communicate but need time to process their thoughts. Long pauses often cause others to believe the client needs more prompts, needs to have questions repeated, or needs to be coached to respond. Speaking to them might prolong this process or increase their emotional burden.
2. Sometimes clients are unable to speak, but they may need to hear your encouragement, validation, advice, and insights. They are looking to you for your professional support and want to benefit from the visit, but may not be able to find the words.
3. AAC stands for augmentative and alternative communication. This is often in the form of an AAC device or an app on a phone which reads words aloud and uses predictive text to make communication possible for people who are unable to speak or find it too difficult in the moment. Some people prefer to write their thoughts. Keep a small selection of colored note cards, notebooks, journals, pens, and pencils for clients who prefer to write.
4. Stimming is short for self-stimulatory behavior. All people stim, but those with neurodevelopmental conditions or trauma tend to stim more frequently. Stimming can be conscious or unconscious repetitive behavior that helps to regulate sensory and emotional health and should not be discouraged unless it is causing harm. Keep a box in your office with objects that allow for purposeful stimming: shiny or sparkling objects, plush keychains, adult coloring books, gel pens, fidget toys, flip sequins, hand-held puzzles and brain teasers, candy, mints, or chewing gum are a few ideas for the box.
5. When someone is overwhelmed, they may feel socially obligated to speak or make you feel comfortable by speaking during a therapy appointment. Giving them room to reinforce boundaries and advocate for their own communication needs and validating their need for breaks is therapeutic. Just knowing that it's healthy and normal will set the tone for a safe environment to heal from trauma.