

TCPix

July 12, 2016

[Shahnaz Ashraf](#)

As a Speech and Language Therapist working with ever changing diverse communities and through conversations with colleagues over the years,

I have found that I am often at a loss to find culturally appropriate images for use in practice and in everyday situations. We, as therapists are often reliant on the internet or purchasing image banks and searching through those. This is costly and time consuming and despite there being a wide range of very good images, they often contain few appropriate images that people from ethnic minorities can relate to. As Total Communication Services CIC is a community Interest company we decided to address this deficit by creating a bank of black and white line drawings which will be available free via our website, enabling others to support choice and understanding in more culturally sensitive ways.



The idea for the project was welcomed and we were fortunate enough to be awarded monies from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Small Good Stuff for the project. This has enabled us to work with Total Communication's own graphic artist Angie Brain to create a library of images. Along the way we have consulted with other Speech and Language Therapists including the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Bilingual Clinical Excellence Network , the National Adults With Learning Disabilities forum members, Dr Pert at the University of Manchester and members of Communication Therapy International. We have also consulted other health and social care colleagues as we are hopeful the images will be of use to other professionals, family members and support staff. We have been overwhelmed by the positive response to the idea and have many more suggestions for vocabulary than we have funds.

Interesting points of learning for us have been around selecting the vocabulary which would be suitable for Service Users who may have always lived in the UK and those who may have moved here more recently. Also we understand that the drawings may not be suitable for every person due to their level of understanding etc. but we are hoping we have found some balance. We have also learned about the importance of communicating more precisely to the artist, how an image needs to be portrayed. Experience of working with adults with Learning Disabilities has taught us that partial images may not be processed as well as full ones, this helped inform our decisions when creating the final product.



A useful development has been the agreement reached via the Bilingual Clinical Excellence Network about the wording for items. The Images are sorted into categories which include Items of clothing, food and drink, Everyday objects amongst others. I hope as the image bank grows we can continue to develop ideas for other communities as the current bank focuses more on the English, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. Our plan is to continue to develop the picture bank but in the mean time we would like to thank the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Small good Stuff for this opportunity.