

Learn the basic Makaton for health signs

Makaton signs and symbols are helpful for people with communication needs and learning disabilities. They are designed to support spoken language. The signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order. This helps provide extra clues about what someone is saying and helps understanding.

This document contains key Makaton signs and symbols which you can use as you talk to people about an illness or symptoms. There are also some helpful videos to show you how to make the signs.

Signing tips:

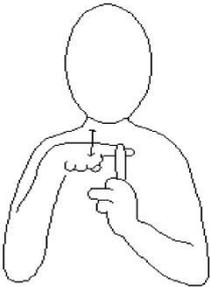
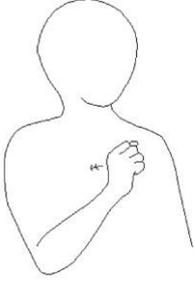
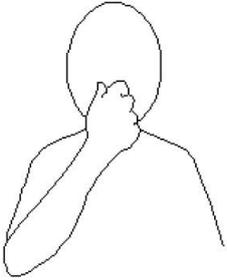
- **Speak as you sign:** Always use the signs alongside simple spoken phrases/sentences.
- **Sign the key words only:** As you are talking, only use signs for the most important words. This makes those words easier to understand. *Don't sign every word you say* – this can be confusing!
- **Keep it simple:** try to keep your message short and simple so the person can process and understand what you are saying.
- **Use facial expression and body language:** This can give more clues about what you are saying e.g If you are talking about pain, a grimace or frown will add meaning.
- **Stick to simple emotions:** Avoid overloading students as they should with service users, people we usually just use happy, sad, worried and angry.
- **Use the signs consistently yourself:** Students are more likely to understand and perhaps start using a new sign if they see it often, a lesson brain break perhaps.
- **Link each new sign to the symbol:** As a teacher, introducing a new sign, you can link it to a symbol to help the person understand its meaning. Model the sign then point to the symbol. You will find symbols at the back of this pack. They can be cut out and used as another visual clue for what you are talking about.
- **Consider having a 'sign of the day':** If you are a student learning with friends or a teacher, model the sign, get the person to copy, point to the symbol that matches, continue to practice its use at every opportunity during the day.

You could get a free account for Makaton signs [Free resources \(makaton.org\)](https://www.makaton.org)

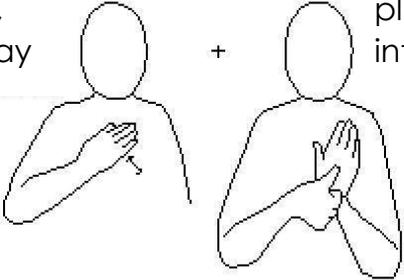
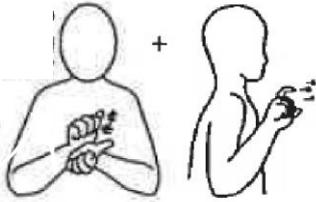


#hscresources

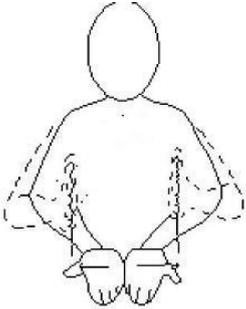
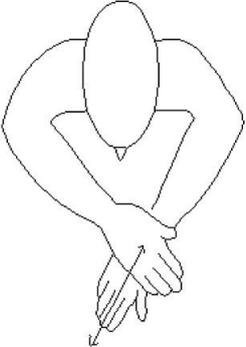
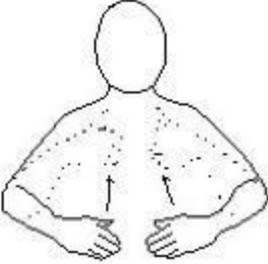
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>Infection</p> <p>place the finger near the area of infection, middle finger flicks off thumb twice</p>	
 <p>Temperature</p>	 <p>Temperature (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Cough</p>	 <p>Cough (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Sneeze</p>	

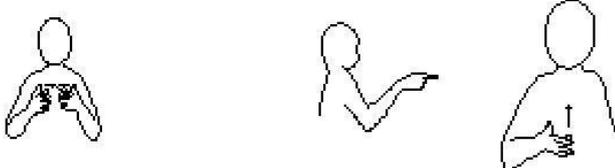
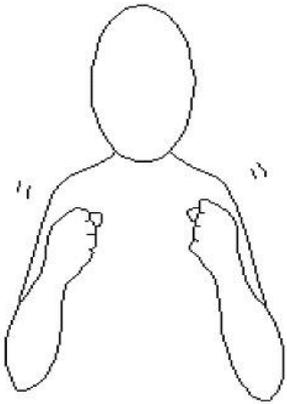
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
<p>palm flat on chest, gently moving away and back with chest rise and fall</p>  <p>plus twist thumb into palm</p> <p>Breathing difficulties</p>	 <p>Breathing difficulties (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>mime pulling tissues out a box</p> <p>Tissue</p>	 <p>Tissue (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>base of palm twist upwards with fingers clenched and thumbs out</p> <p>Dirty</p>	 <p>Singing Hands: #MakatonMonday 2017 #35 - CLEAN / DIRTY - in Makaton (youtube.com)</p>
<p>Dirty plus</p>  <p>Slightly hook index finger making several random taps over a small area to indicate tiny cells, do this over area where germs are.</p> <p>Germs</p>	 <p>Germs - YouTube</p>

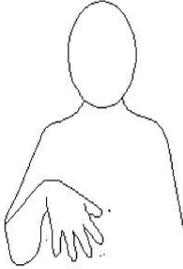
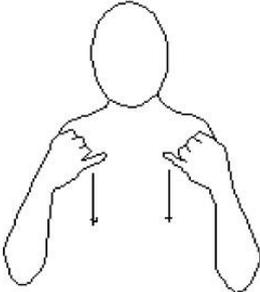
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>Bin</p> <p>draw a U shape starting at the bottom with palms flat</p>	 <p>Bin (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>slide one downturn palm over the upturned palm in a brush motion</p> <p>Clean</p>	 <p>Bin (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Wash hands/Soap</p> <p>mime pulling tissues out a box</p>	 <p>Wash your hands (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>How are you?</p>	 <p>How are you (youtube.com)</p>

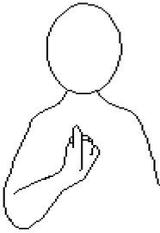
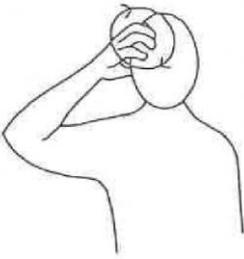
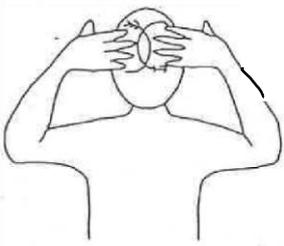
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>middle finger moves up chest</p> <p>How do you feel?</p>	 <p>How are you (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>middle finger moves up chest</p> <p>I feel...</p>	
 <p>Hot</p> <p>middle 'phew', a brow sweep</p>	 <p>Feeling warm (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Cold</p> <p>clench fists up and mimic shivering</p>	

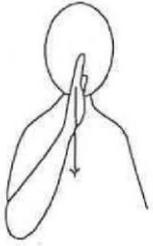
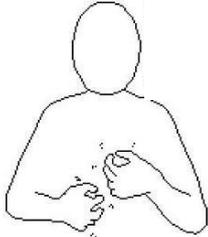
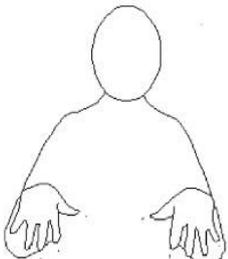
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>position hand at the part of the body that hurts and shake hand/fingers</p> <p>Pain</p>	
 <p>point to the throat shake hand</p> <p>Sore Throat</p>	
 <p>ill</p> <p>little finger out and slow movement down chest</p>	 <p>Ill (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>palms back to back moved down with tips of finger touching</p> <p>Tired</p> <p>shoulders sag to show degree of tiredness</p>	<p><i>A good one for teachers to use at the end of most lessons!</i></p>
 <p>Index finger moves slightly to the right and circles</p> <p>Dizzy</p>	

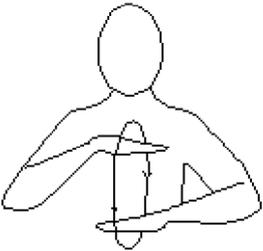
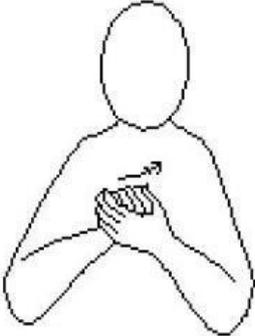
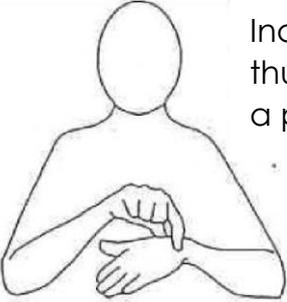
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>Shake hand held over the forehead</p> <p>headache</p>	 <p>Headache (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Good</p>	
 <p>Little finger extended</p> <p>Bad</p> <p>Nore, some people prefer the thumbs down sign, it's simply a matter of preference</p>	
 <p>Tense hand in a circle over side of head. If very worried, use both and remember the supporting facial expression</p> <p>Worried</p>	 <p>Worried (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>circling a clawed hands overlap in alternating movements</p> <p>Confused</p>	 <p>Confused (youtube.com)</p>

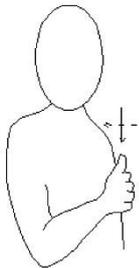
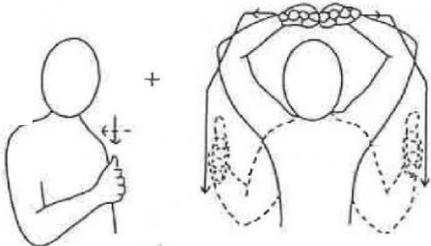
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>right index finger moves sharply down behind the left hand, both open to flat hands, palms down, and move forwards</p> <p>Lonely</p>	 <p>Lonely (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>flat hand central to face and moved downwards</p> <p>Sad</p>	 <p>Sad (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>tremble/shake one hand with outspread fingers and corresponding facial expression</p> <p>Scared / Frightened</p>	 <p>Scared (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>tension in one or both hands, indicating severity</p> <p>Angry</p>	 <p>Angry (youtube.com)</p>
<p>Nervous</p>  <p>hands down and tremble, corresponding facial expression</p>	

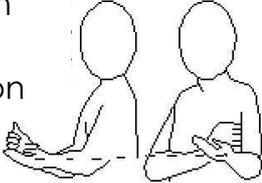
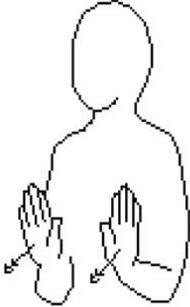
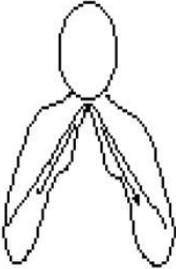
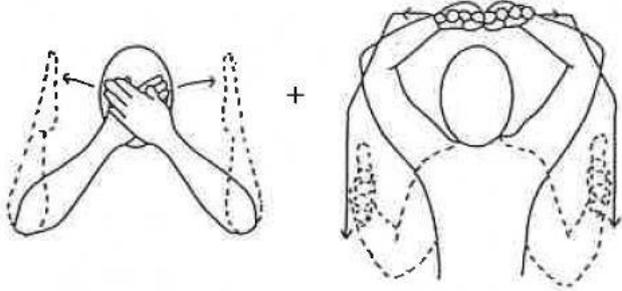
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>Bored mimic yawn</p>	
 <p>(1) Calm - Makaton sign language - DanceMatters - YouTube</p> <p>Calm palms down, circular motion, one hand over the other</p>	
 <p>Happy slightly cup hands and in the crux make a slight sweeping wiggle – watch the video!</p>	 <p>Happy (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Index finger and thumb, mime taking a pulse</p> <p>Doctor</p>	 <p>Doctor (youtube.com)</p>

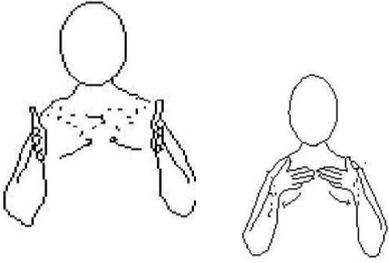
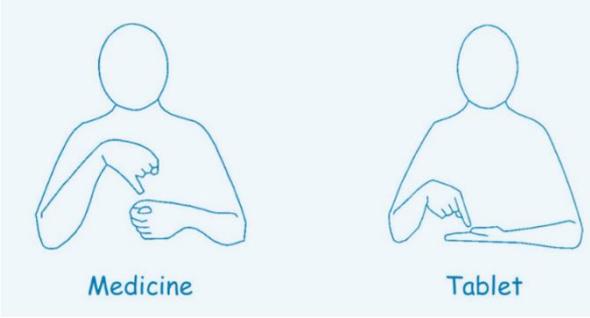
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>thumb traces a cross on the outside top of arm</p> <p>Nurse</p>	 <p>Singing Hands: #MakatonMonday 2017</p>
 <p>movement should be gradual and gentle</p> <p>Dead / Died</p>	 <p>(1) No longer with us - YouTube#13 - PEOPLE</p>
<p>nurse sign PLUS....</p>  <p>Hospital</p> <p>roof and walls indicated</p>	
 <p>index finger to circulate the outside of the face</p> <p>Face</p>	 <p>Face (youtube.com)</p>

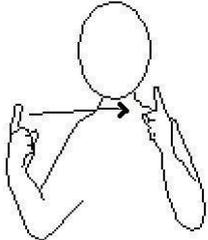
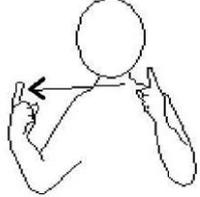
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
<p>cup right hand, flatten left, use a scoop motion</p>  <p>Safe</p> <p>hands move back together and drawn into the</p>	 <p>Safe (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Stay</p> <p>both hands up in a 'stop' motion and push slightly away</p>	 <p>Stay (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>flatten hands draw two-sides of a triangle (roof)</p> <p>Home</p>	 <p>Home (youtube.com)</p>
<p>day - mimic eye cover and uncover</p>  <p>Day (care) centre</p> <p>roof and walls motion</p>	

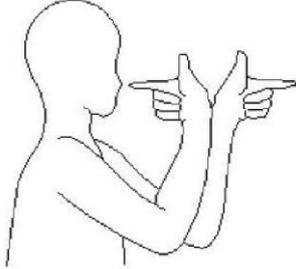
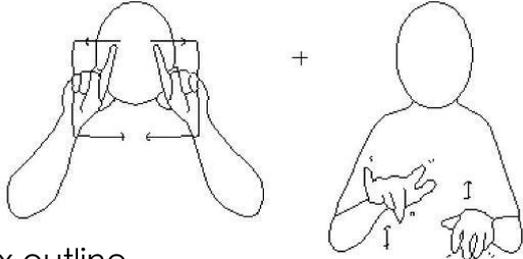
Overcoming communication barriers in health

Sign	Video
 <p>First and second fingers in a V shape, both hands then move downwards in a step motion</p> <p>To care for/To look after</p>	 <p>https://youtu.be/5prON0ohU-s</p>
 <p>hands either side of the temple moved around the front bringing them together, like drawing a band</p> <p>College/6th Form</p>	 <p>College (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>mimic open gates and move to close, index finger tip touches. the opposite for open.</p> <p>Close</p> <p>Open</p> 	 <p>Closed (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Medicine</p> <p>Makaton signs for Doctor, Nurse, Medicine, Tablet, Sick & Pain (youtube.com)</p>	

Overcoming communication barriers in health

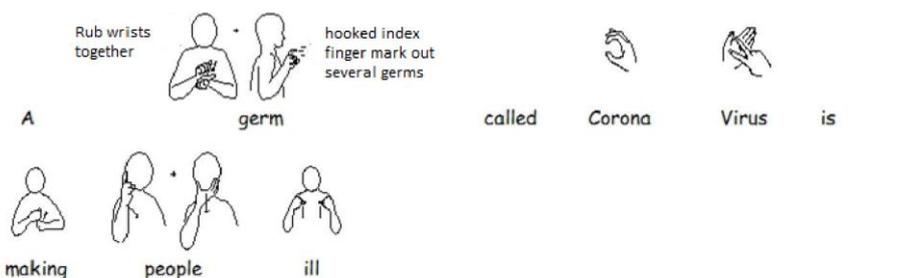
Sign	Video
 <p>No/don't</p>	 <p>No / don't (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>both fingers up and move one towards the other closing the gap</p> <p>Near</p>	 <p>Near (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>opposite of the above</p> <p>Apart</p>	 <p>Far/away (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>thumb and finger up mimicking a phone by ear and mouth</p> <p>Phone or phone call</p>	 <p>Telephone (youtube.com)</p>

Overcoming communication barriers in health

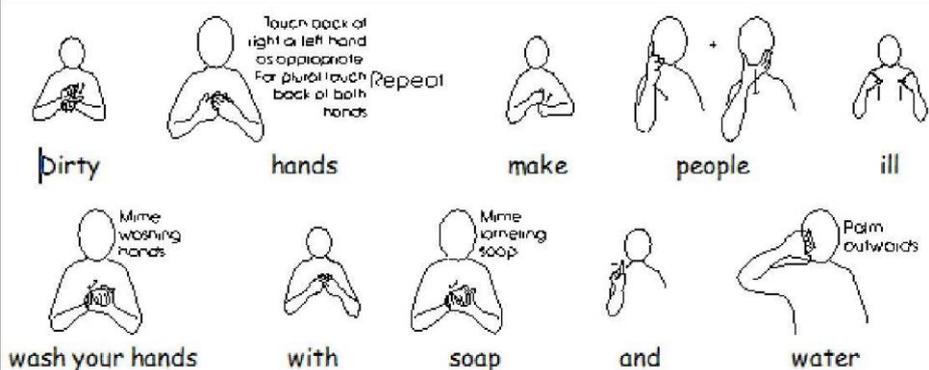
Sign	Video
 <p>Video call</p>	 <p>Skype (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>draw box outline</p> <p>Computer</p> <p>mimic touching keyboard keys</p>	 <p>Computer (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>hold hands firmly and a movement down, twice</p> <p>looks like a handshake</p> <p>Friend</p>	 <p>Friend (youtube.com)</p>
 <p>Hold the finger BSL alphabet F and move in a circle</p>  <p>Family</p>	 <p>Family (youtube.com)</p>

Overcoming communication barriers in health

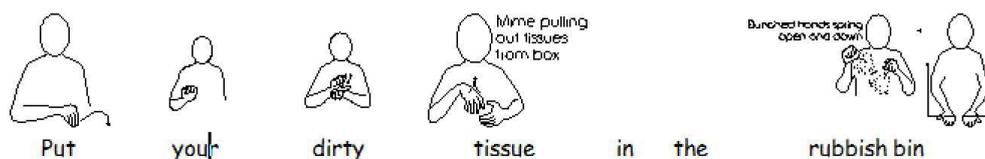
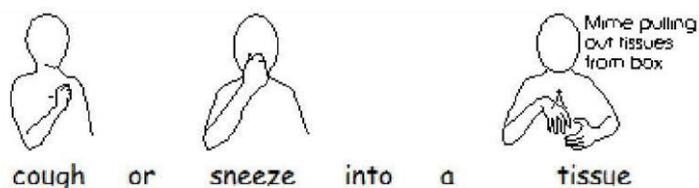
In Makaton the word is spoken in a sentence but only the key words are signed. Your facial expression and body position/stance supports a sign. Below are some sentence examples which may be useful



[A germ called corona virus](#)



[Dirty hands make us ill wash your hands with soap and water](#)



[Put dirty tissue in the bin \(youtube.com\)](#)

Overcoming communication barriers in health

try not to touch your face

Fingers touch palm, gently

index finger quines face

[Don't touch your face \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

wash your hands with soap and water

Mime washing hands

Mime lathering soap

Palm outwards

[Wash your hands whilst you sing \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

We can speak to friends and family on the telephone or computer

small downward movement Repeat

Finger spell F and move in circular motion

[We can talk to family and friends... \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

we can't go to day centre

indicate direction

gradually uncover eyes

[We can't go to the day centre \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Overcoming communication barriers in health



infection



infection



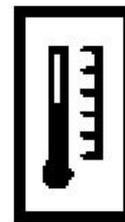
cough



cough



temperature



temperature

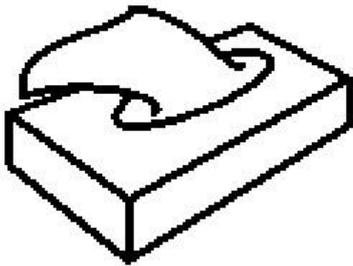


sneeze



sneeze

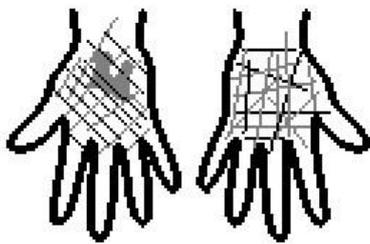
Overcoming communication barriers in health



tissue



tissue



dirty



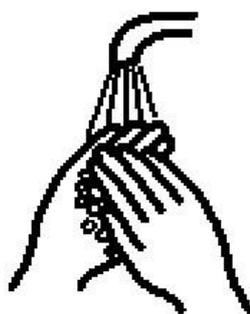
dirty



clean



clean

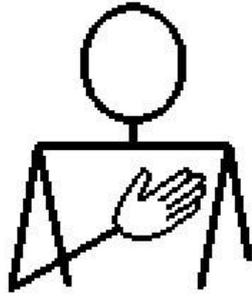


wash hands



wash hands

Overcoming communication barriers in health



I feel



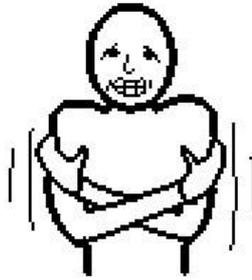
I feel



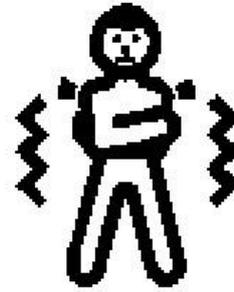
hot



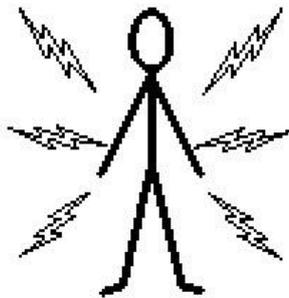
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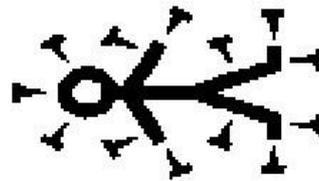
cold



cold

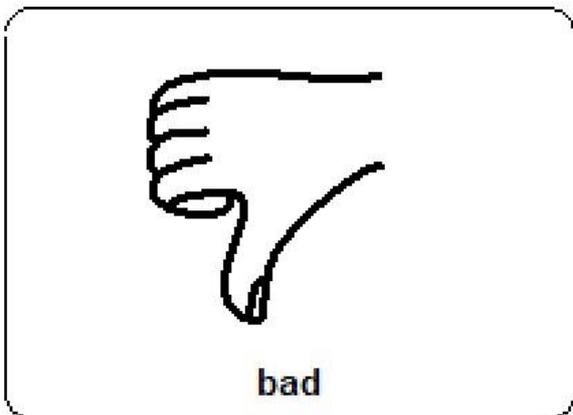
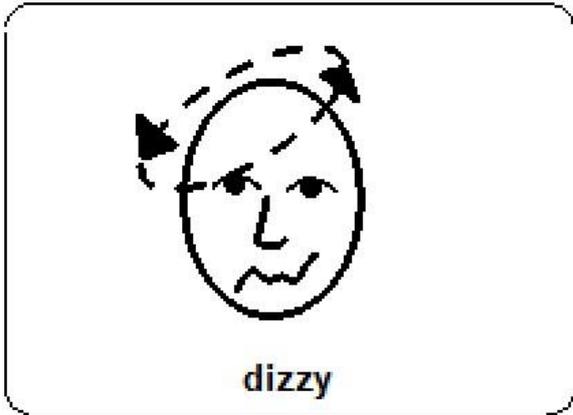
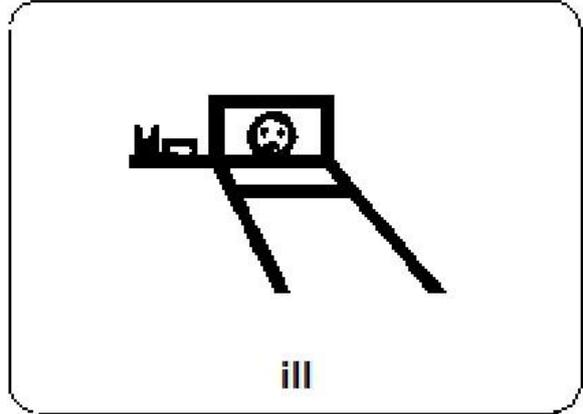


pain



pain

Overcoming communication barriers in health



Overcoming communication barriers in health



worried



worried



confused



confused



frightened



frightened



nervous



nervous

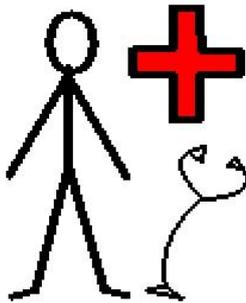
Overcoming communication barriers in health



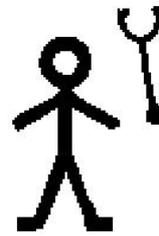
calm



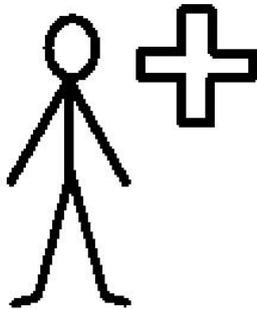
calm



doctor



doctor



nurse



nurse