

Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign

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# Different communication techniques: Key Word Sign (KWS)

# Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign

## Instructions for behaviour support practitioners

This document provides line drawings and descriptions of key manual signs to support communication during behaviour support planning and conversations.

Use Key Word Sign (KWS) together with the associated spoken word. Use Signs to emphasise key concepts by providing visual emphasis for important words and concepts.

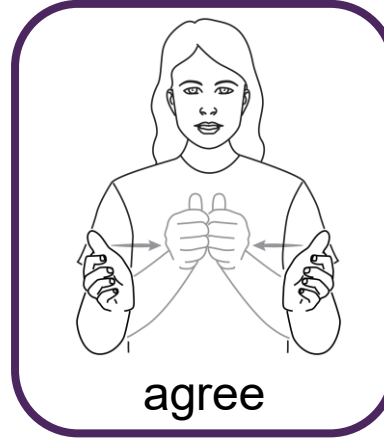
Some participants may already know some Signs and use these expressively.

Other participants may benefit from working with you to see and learn key Signs that support understanding and engagement during the behaviour support process.

Key Word Sign is an inclusive communication strategy for individuals with communication and behaviour support needs. Signs are respectfully borrowed from Auslan, Australian Sign Language.

Find more [Key Word Sign specific to behaviour support planning](https://therightdirectionpbs.com) at [therightdirectionpbs.com](https://therightdirectionpbs.com).

# Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign



# Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign (descriptions)

## **behaviour**

Place both flat hands in front of chest, palm on body. Move hands down off chest in alternating circular motions.

## **like / dislike**

Move open dominant hand in small circles on chest. \*May also tap chest with flat hand. Use facial expression.

## **agree**

Make a fist in both hands, thumbs extended. Start at sides of body then bring together to touch in front of the body.

## **disagree**

Make a fist in both hands, thumbs extended. Hold together in centre of the body, then move hands apart to end palms up.

## **calm**

Place open dominant hand on chest, palm on body. Move hand down off chest, twice. \*May use two hands.

## **happy**

Clap heels of open cupped hands together twice, hands moving in small outward circles, with happy facial expression.

## **sad**

Place edge of index finger of open dominant hand, on chin and move up and forward slightly, with sad facial expression.

## **angry**

Hold tips of cupped dominant hand, fingers spread, on side of waist. Flick formation to palm up, once.

## **frustrated**

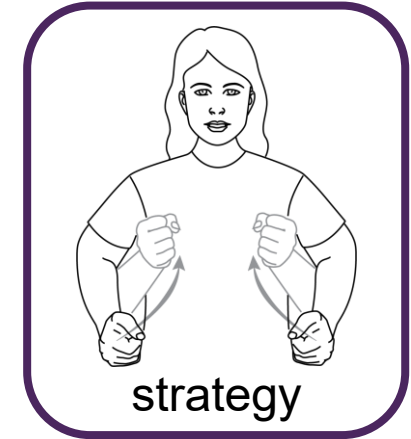
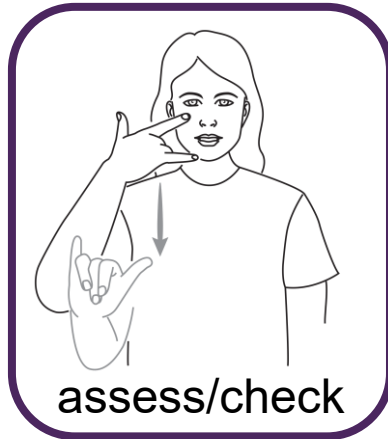
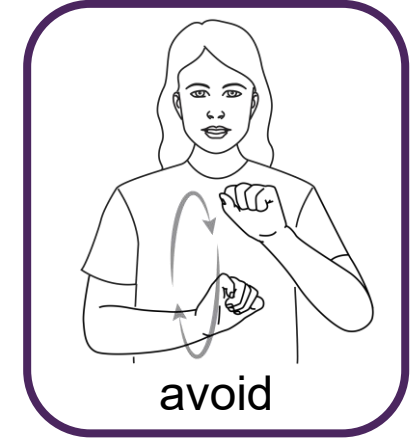
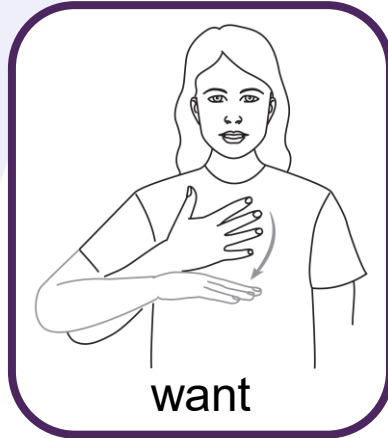
Spread and curve fingers of both hands. Place in front of stomach, palms facing body. Simultaneously move hands in inwards circles.

## **scared**

Cup dominant hand, fingers spread. Bounce fingertips on upper chest, twice.



# Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign



# Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign (descriptions)

**want**

Move flat dominant hand down front of chest and turn to palm down.

**need**

Move open dominant hand in small circles on chest. \*May also tap chest with flat hand. Use facial expression.

**learn**

Hold both hands palms down with index fingers pointing forward and rub index fingers together backwards and forwards.

**talk**

Extend index fingers of both hands. Place dominant hand on top, crossing at the wrist. Move dominant hand up and down, twice.

**avoid**

Make a fist with each hand. Hold in front of body palms facing forwards. Alternately circle each hand back towards body, like stepping back.

**assess / check**

Extend index finger, little finger and thumb of dominant hand. Touch tip of index finger underneath eye. Flick wrist outwards and down while closing into fist with thumb and little finger remaining extended.

**information**

Extend index fingers on both hands, palms facing body. Move fingers in small forwards circles around each other.

**reason (why)**

Extend dominant index finger and thumb. Place thumb on upper chest of same side. Sweep formation down body in a shallow arc

**skill**

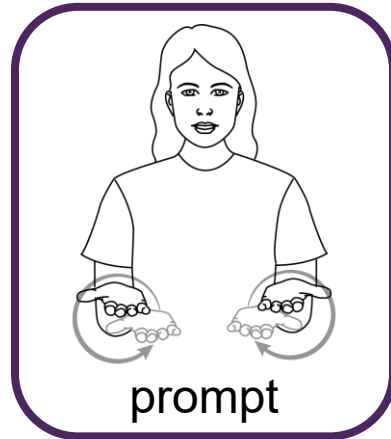
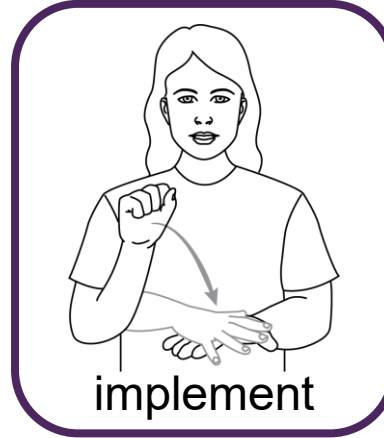
Hold flat non-dominant hand at side of body, palm facing centre. With fingers and thumb of dominant hand, pull downwards on blade on hand.

**strategy**

Hold both fists as sides of body, palms facing in. Simultaneously move both fists forwards and up to waist height.



# Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign



# Behaviour support planning using Key Word Sign (descriptions)

## **positive** (good)

Extend dominant thumb, close rest of fingers into fist, thumb pointing up, move forward with emphasis (natural gesture).

## **alternative** (different)

Extend index fingers of both hands, hold them palms down, edges of fingers touching. Roll wrists over to end with palms up.

## **implement**

Hold flat non-dominant hand in front of body, palm up. Tap dominant fist onto palm, release fingers as hand moves forward.

## **progress**

Hold both flat hands in front of body, non-dominant ahead. Alternately roll hands around each other whilst moving forward.

## **improvement**

Extend index finger of non-dominant hand. Join index finger and thumb of dominant hand. Slide this formation up non-dominant index finger.

## **safety**

Scoop blade of slightly cupped dominant hand, across open palm of non-dominant hand towards body.

## **prompt**

Hold both spread hands, palms up, in front of body. Simultaneously scoop hands in a forwards, circular movement.

## **de-escalate** (reduce)

Bend fingers of flat dominant hand at third knuckle. Hold at shoulder height, palm facing in. Lower formation to mid chest height.

## **restrictive**

Make a fist with each hand, cross at the wrists with palms facing body, hold in front of chest. Reverse direction of the fists, so they face outwards; remain crossed at the wrist.

## **practice**

Extend thumbs of both hands and place on body at chest height. Simultaneously stroke thumbs down body, twice.



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# Find out more

[therightdirectionpbs.com](http://therightdirectionpbs.com)



The  
Right  
Direction

Working together on  
positive behaviour  
support (PBS)

Funded by the NDIS Quality and  
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NDIS Quality  
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