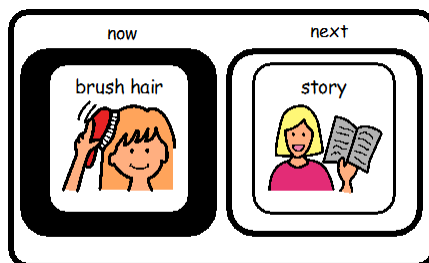


12. Using Now/ Next Visual Timetables with Symbols

What are Now/ Next Visual Timetables?

A now/ next visual timetable is used to show what is happening now, and what is coming next. Sometimes the words first/ then are used instead. The visual timetable can be made up of symbols. This shows the routine of 'now brush hair' and 'next story'.



Why are Now/ Next Visual Timetables used?

They are used to help an individual:

- focus on a task or activity
- understand what is happening now and next
- transition from different activities
- complete a task that they are not motivated to do

How to introduce Now/ Next Visual Timetables

- choose two activities that are going to happen in sequence
- think about whether you offer highly motivating activities first, second or for both
- place the symbol that represents the first activity on the black 'now' box
- place the symbol that represents the second activity on the 'next' box
- show the individual the now/ next visual timetable and verbally reinforce the 'now' and 'next' activity in order by saying for example, 'now brush hair' 'next story' whilst pointing to the symbol. Then repeat 'now brush hair'.
- when you have finished the activity, encourage them to put the symbol in the 'finished' pocket

How to help the individual to use them

When introducing the now/ next visual timetable an individual may:

- not look at the symbol
 - keep trying as this is not unexpected
- fleetingly look at the symbol
 - acknowledge this form of communication and say the words again
- take the symbol
 - name it again and move on to do the activity
 - put the symbol back on the now/ next visual timetable

- want to play with the symbol
 - as this may be a new experience allow the individual to explore the symbol for a short while then quickly move onto do the activity it represents. If the individual learns to play with the symbol it becomes a toy and loses its meaning as something that represents an activity.
 - put the symbol back on the now/ next visual timetable
- be inconsistent in responding to it
 - talk to the team about why this might be (e.g. not understanding, not being motivated, tiredness, time of day etc...)
 - it might be a normal part of learning
 - persist
- not want to do the activity (e.g. won't go to the snack table when you show the symbol)
 - take the now/ next board with you or let them carry it – this will help them understand and keep remembering what is happening
 - keep the travel distance between showing and doing - short
 - you can interpret this communication and say 'oh no snack' if you are sure they understand. If they don't – you might want to bring the snack they like to the symbol and help them see the connection that good things happen when this symbol comes out.
- not want to do the activity on the 'now' box but want to do activity on the 'next' box
- repeat the phrase 'now brush hair' 'next story' whilst pointing at the relevant symbol; repeat 'now brush hair'
- for ease of use you can carry the now/ next visual timetable by presenting it on a keyring, for example:



Possible next steps:

- encourage the individual to use the now/ next visual timetable with increasing independence. Decide whether to start with one or both of the following steps:
 - putting the symbol in the finished pocket
 - moving the next activity symbol onto the black 'now' box
- each step can be taught by pointing to (physical prompt) and naming (verbal prompt) the symbol you wish the individual to move for example:
- say '(XXX) finished' whilst pointing to the symbol then finished pocket
- pause at this point to give the individual the opportunity to move the symbol
- if the individual does not attempt to do this, repeat the above process
- if the individual attempts but cannot complete the step you can gently guide the individual's hand (hand under hand prompt) to the symbol and then to the finished pocket. Reinforce this with verbal instruction as above. (NB. This step is not advised for individuals who do not like to have their hands guided)
- reduce any physical prompts/ hand under hand guidance as the individual's independence increases
- introduce visual timetable for part or whole day