

# Talking Mats<sup>®</sup>



## Talking Mats<sup>®</sup> is:

- \* a well researched communication framework that enables people who have difficulty communicating to express their views
- \* a framework for supporting people to understand, reflect and organise their thoughts

This brochure describes the Talking Mats resources and training that you can purchase to enhance your service.

Talking Mats can be used by staff and carers in a wide range of settings with children and adults e.g. residential homes, hospitals, day services, schools.

[www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)

# Introduction

Talking Mats was developed by speech and language therapists and the principles used are based on robust research evidence. It can be used by a variety of people and different Talking Mats resources are available for different client groups. More information and demonstration DVDs are available on our website [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com). The website has details of our current prices and special offers.

## Client-specific Talking Mats resources

These are resources that are aimed at specific client groups, e.g. young people in social care or education settings, people with a learning disability, dementia, or aphasia. These resources all include DVDs showing real clients demonstrating the use of the Talking Mats framework (pages 4–8).



## What is in a Talking Mats resource?

Each resource contains:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro®
- \* resource-specific leaflet
- \* symbol sets<sup>1</sup> that are designed for a particular client group or topic
- \* a visual scale for use with the mat



### Combined Talking Mats resources

Combined resources (page 13) are available for working with different client groups or if you wish to use Talking Mats to discuss a variety of topics.

### Topic-specific Talking Mats resources

In addition there are Talking Mats resources that are aimed at specific topics e.g. goal setting, alternative eating and drinking, weight management. There is also a Talking Mats resource available, 'To see ourselves as others see us', which allows different perspectives on communication to be considered. These resources can be used across client groups (pages 9–12).

### Training

The Talking Mats team provides a range of high quality and well regarded training courses (pages 14–15).



# Talking Mats and Young People

Developed by: Jane Macer & Joan Murphy

In social care and education settings, young people are being encouraged to feedback views on the services they receive and to reflect on their own needs and progress. This Talking Mats resource has been created at Stirling University, in collaboration with the pupils of Starley Hall School, an independent service for young people requiring residential support and education.

This package contains 60 symbols, selected to facilitate the involvement of young people in target setting and reviews.

*This is a valuable resource for anyone working to improve communication and consultation with young people using care services.*



These symbol sets provide a framework for discussion leading to recordable information reflecting a young person's views.

The symbols support the focus of attention and thinking, allowing the young person to take control of the interaction as they make their decisions and place the picture symbols on the mat. Through this technique young people with varying levels of confidence and communication skill can take part in a structured conversation and build up a visual picture of their views.

**The 60 symbols are divided into four topic areas:**

- \* care and learning
- \* rights
- \* progress
- \* environment

A DVD showing young people from Starley Hall using the above symbol sets is included, along with a:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro
- \* resource-specific leaflet

# Talking Mats and Learning Disability

Developed by: **Joan Murphy & Lois Cameron**

For people with a learning disability choices can often be limited and it can be difficult to ensure their voice is heard. This is particularly true for those people with a learning disability and communication impairment. This package incorporates the thoughts and ideas which have evolved from a wealth of both clinical and research experience. This resource can be used with people with a learning disability at any age. It is a structured approach that enables people to think about and express their views.



## The symbol sets in this resource are:

- \* **a starter topic** (animals)
  - to enable you to explore whether an individual can use the framework
- \* **activities** – this is a common topic that is relevant to many people's everyday lives

Also includes a DVD showing people with a learning disability using Talking Mats

*This resource is very useful for staff working with people with learning disability in a variety of settings e.g. housing associations, advocacy groups, day, education and employment services.*

## Plus:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro
- \* resource-specific leaflet



# Talking Mats and Dementia

**Developed by:** Jane Macer & Joan Murphy

This evidence based resource is really helpful for anyone wishing to improve the quality of communication and engagement with people with dementia.

Government guidelines state that people with dementia must be at the centre of planning and involved in decisions about care and treatment. However, deterioration of communication is a key component of the illness and is one of the most distressing aspects for the individual and those who care for them.

Talking Mats is a framework that helps to ensure that people who struggle with communication or cognitive problems can express their views and remain involved in planning their lives. It is also an effective communication tool for friends, family and carers.



## The 58 symbols are divided into three topic sets:

- \* **where you live** (your living environment)
- \* **activities** (things you do)
- \* **you** (your health and support)

A DVD of people with dementia, using the above symbol sets is included.

## Plus:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro
- \* resource-specific leaflet

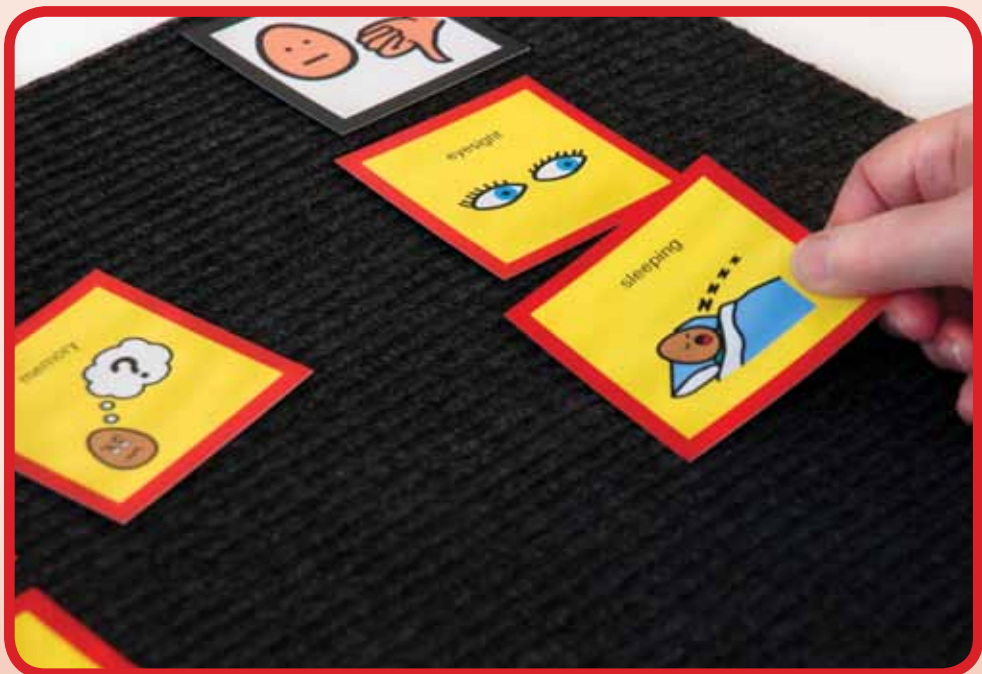


*It is a good tool for a blether.*

Gracelands Nursing Home

*We find it a really useful tool for night staff. Using it with residents can be calming.*

Adamwood Nursing Home



*It enabled us to build a profile of our clients, focusing on their abilities. The Care Commission commented favourably on our use of Talking Mats.*

Mains House Care Home Limited. The use of Talking Mats is built into the organisation's care plan 'Stories and symbol sets'.

**For further information  
visit [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk) to  
see research findings.**

 **JOSEPH ROWNTREE  
FOUNDATION**

# Talking Mats and Aphasia

Developed by: **Sally Boa & Joan Murphy**

Aphasia is a communication disability which occurs when the language centres of the brain are damaged. It is usually caused by a stroke, but can also be caused by head injury or brain tumour. Those involved with people with aphasia need to apply creative means to communicate, and this accessible framework provides an effective and empowering way to exchange ideas.



Goal-setting and patient self-management are now established as important aspects of the rehabilitation process. The DVD included in this resource shows people with aphasia participating in setting rehabilitation goals.

*This is a really useful framework for staff working with people with aphasia to express their views. This will be helpful in a variety of settings e.g. rehabilitation units, day centres and care homes.*

## The symbol sets in this resource are:

- \* **a starter topic** (animals) – to enable you to explore whether an individual can use the framework
- \* **activities** – this is a common topic that is relevant to many people's everyday lives

A DVD showing people with aphasia using Talking Mats is included.

## Plus:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro
- \* resource-specific leaflet



# Talking Mats and Goal Setting

Developed by: **Sally Boa & Joan Murphy**

The Talking Mats and Goal Setting resource explains how the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO-ICF 2001) has been adapted for use in conjunction with Talking Mats to help people actively participate in setting their own goals for rehabilitation and in making decisions about their lives. The authors have converted the nine WHO-ICF domains into symbols to make them more easily understood. These domains or 'topics' act as a good starting point to help people to consider issues in their lives and, as a further expansion, subsets of 'option' symbols related to each topic have been developed. As rehabilitation typically involves two or more domains, this model allows the person to consider their goals holistically.

## This resource contains:

- \* **a leaflet** detailing the use of Talking Mats in conjunction with the WHO-ICF
- \* **180 symbols** in both 'hard copy' and on a CD which requires Boardmaker® software to operate. These symbols cover the nine ICF domains.
- \* **a poster** mapping the topics and options



## Plus:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro

*This symbol resource set is a particularly useful resource for staff working with people with long term conditions and will be helpful in a variety of settings e.g. rehabilitation units, day centres and care homes. This resource is complementary to the aphasia resource.*

# Talking Mats and Alternative Eating and Drinking

**Developed by:** Sally Boa, Lois Cameron & Joan Murphy

Difficulty with eating and drinking can become distressing for all concerned. This unique pack is designed to help people make informed decisions about alternative eating and drinking methods. The leaflet describes how Talking Mats can be used in practice to provide information to people who are considering alternative eating and drinking methods e.g. modified textures or Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy placement (PEG). This resource is written on the assumption that the reader is a qualified practitioner involved in eating and drinking issues and is familiar with the Talking Mats framework.



## This resource contains:

- \* **61 symbols** which are divided into three Talking Mats topic areas:
  - **issues surrounding meals**
  - **health**
  - **things that might help**
- \* **13 symbols** that allow the practitioner to give information about PEG
- \* **a leaflet** detailing how Talking Mats can be used in this decision making process including some case examples

*For practitioners who are required to support individuals make informed decisions about alternative eating and drinking methods this resource is invaluable.*

## Plus:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro

# Talking Mats and Weight Management

**Developed by:** Pamela McIntosh & Lois Cameron

Based on research evidence, this resource supports people in their weight management by:

- \* increasing the understanding of issues involved
- \* promoting the person's involvement in decision making
- \* enabling people to review and think about their progress

## This resource contains:

- \* **a starter topic** (animals) – to enable you to explore whether an individual can use the framework
- \* **52 symbols** that are divided into two Talking Mats symbol sets:
  - **key points to weight loss**
  - **food**
- \* **a teaching tool** using a further 12 symbols that allows the practitioner to explore the health risks of obesity with the client
- \* **two award-winning health information leaflets:**
  - Do you want to stay fat?
  - Healthy eating and gentle exercise

All the symbol sets in this pack are produced on sheets of good quality card – duplicate sets are provided.



## Plus:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro
- \* resource-specific leaflet

*This is a really useful framework for staff to support the involvement of people in their weight management and has been developed with and for people with a learning disability although it can be used by other groups, e.g. people who have had a stroke.*

# Talking Mats – ‘To see ourselves as others see us’

**Developed by:** Morag Place, Joan Murphy & Alex Gillespie

This Talking Mats package can be used to analyse similarities or differences in viewpoint between two people. It is a valuable tool specially designed to facilitate discussion between people with a communication difficulty and their close communication partners with the aim of increasing mutual understanding and aiding decision-making or goal-setting negotiations. This technique was originally used with people with aphasia and their key communication partners but it has the potential to be used with a much wider range of client groups with a variety of topics.

*This award winning resource is a unique approach for therapists and counsellors who want to help people understand what another individual is feeling. This resource uses Talking Mats in a way that allows different perspectives and views to be considered.*



## This resource contains:

- \* **42 communication symbols** to allow consideration of different people's perspectives
- \* a DVD showing people with aphasia and their close communication partners using the resource

**This resource won the 2010 UK Advancing Healthcare Award.**

## Plus:

- \* smart storage bag
- \* Talking Mats book: *A Resource to Enhance Communication*
- \* mat
- \* Velcro
- \* resource-specific leaflet

# Combined Resources



If you provide services for different client groups or particular specialist groups you may wish to consider a combined resource.

This is a cost effective way of buying two resources which complement each other and contain all the items (with duplicates removed) that you would receive if buying the two resources separately.

For example:

**Talking Mats and Dementia** combined with **Talking Mats and Aphasia** is a great combination for care homes, day services for the elderly and therapists working with older people

**Talking Mats and Learning Disability** combined with **Talking Mats and Dementia** will be very helpful to people working with older people with a learning disability

**Talking Mats and Goal Setting** combined with **Talking Mats and Aphasia** is a really useful combination for staff working in rehabilitation

**Talking Mats and Aphasia** combined with **To see ourselves as others see us** is an excellent combination for therapists, psychologists and counsellors to enable people with aphasia and their partners to express their views and explore perspectives

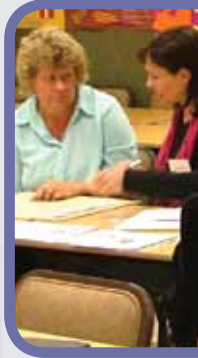
**Talking Mats and Learning Disability** combined with **Talking Mats and Weight Management** is a very practical resource for people working in learning disability teams

**Talking Mats and Alternative Eating & Drinking** combined with **Talking Mats and Weight Management** is useful for dietitians and staff working with nutritional issues

# Talking Mats Training

We offer different types of training

*Fantastic course pitched at just the right level, lots of reflection and food for thought.*



## Why do you need training?

Talking Mats is a simple framework but people need time and practice to become confident with the principles involved in using it.

The training provides the opportunity for people to:

- \* build confidence in using the Talking Mats framework
- \* develop their own communication skills
- \* reflect on how to apply Talking Mats
- \* be creative in their use of Talking Mats

We deliver high quality training which people find inspiring, practical and enjoyable.

## Regular Talking Mats courses

These are courses that individuals can book onto. This training allows participants to reflect on their own communication and to be creative in terms of how to use and develop their use of Talking Mats within their own setting.

*Such a useful system for so many people!! I'm very inspired.*

## Specialist training courses

For example, using Talking Mats in research, using Talking Mats to assess capacity, Talking Mats in career planning, moving Talking Mats into business.



## Organisational training

We run in-house training that can be tailored to an organisation's specific requirements.

## Accredited training

This two-day assessed course enables participants to deliver Talking Mats training within their own organisation. To be eligible to apply participants must be trained and experienced in using Talking Mats.

## Who can attend the training?

A wide range of people attend Talking Mats training. The list includes therapists, nurses, doctors, psychologists, teachers, advocacy workers, carers, researchers, employment support staff and family members.

*DVDs and practical work really helpful.*

## How to find out about courses

We run regular courses e.g. in:

Stirling • London • the north of England • Dublin

Please check our website, [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com), for dates or email our training administrator [karen.crow@stir.ac.uk](mailto:karen.crow@stir.ac.uk).



# Additional Resources



UNIVERSITY OF  
STIRLING

Additional symbol sets are also available to purchase separately to complement your existing Talking Mats resources and/or training.

- \* activities
- \* dementia
- \* young people
- \* sub sets of the **Talking Mats and Goal Setting** resource which is based on the WHO-ICF

Please see [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com) for further details.



Other resources available for purchase include:

- \* *Talking to People with Severe Communications Difficulties* – an introductory training DVD and leaflet
- \* *Don't Hang Up* – a training resource (containing a workbook and DVD) to help people with communication difficulties to use the telephone
- \* *Talking Together* – communication strategies for people with MND and their partners. This resource comprises a DVD and 3 leaflets
- \* *Attitudes and Strategies Towards AAC* – a training package (containing a workbook and DVD) for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) users and carers

## [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)

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