

# Talking mats



Talking mats provides a visual way to help a person talk about important issues. It can be used for people who have difficulty talking or for people who find it difficult to express their opinions. You can use talking mats to make choices, share feelings and ideas and discuss likes / dislikes.



## How to make a Talking mat



You will need:

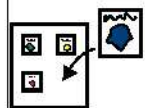
A small doormat or blank board or laminated paper with velcro.

Pictures of what you want to talk about - laminate and stick velcro on the back

A visual scale with 2 or 3 options - laminate and stick velcro on the back

For example:

Yes	Don't know	No
Happy		Sad
More		Less
Good	Ok	Bad
Calm	Ok	Angry



## How to use Talking mats



1. Put the mat in front of the person and place the scale at the top. Describe the scale e.g. 'this is for happy and this is for sad'.
2. When using the mat for the first time start with an easy subject such as things you know the person likes/ hates so you can check how reliable their responses are. You may need to model it for the person first to show them what to do. For example 'I like peas', 'I hate shopping'. When you model make sure you do not use the same vocabulary (symbols) that they will use as they may copy your responses thinking there is a right or wrong answer.
3. Give the pictures to the person one at a time, say the word and encourage them to put it on the mat.
4. Check with the person that the picture is in the right place. A person may need help to put the pictures on the mat. Keep doing this until you have finished the activity (they have said what they wanted to say).
5. You can take a picture of the mat as a record of the conversation to see if the responses are consistent.