

BEYOND WORDS



Our aim is to create a warm, inclusive environment where language becomes a bridge rather than a barrier—connecting us more deeply with nature and each other.

MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION

We might not realise it, but over 60% of our communication isn't about words at all—yet we spend most of our energy focusing on the 40% that is. Perhaps it's time to redress that balance. Picture yourself on a nature walk where you can't understand a word being spoken. Without even thinking about it, you'd naturally slip into **multimodal communication**—an official term for all the other ways we connect with each other.

This might include:

- **Unaided methods** like tone of voice, facial expressions, and hand gestures
- **Aided communication** using sketches, pointing to objects, or showing pictures
- **Technology-aided** helpers like translation apps or audio guides



REFLECT

What might unfold if you met someone without words—communicating in other ways entirely?

TIPS

- Ensure **key phrases are properly translated** – prepare printed invitations in large, clear text (minimum 25pt font) on A3 blocks that you can carry and flip through as needed. Use colour coding for each language so participants can quickly spot their own.
- Try **visual communication** – some people respond better to pictures than words. Create simple visual cue cards showing key phrases or invitations—these work well for senses, for example.
- Don't forget **body language** —gestures, facial expressions, and even sounds can be incredibly effective during nature activities, often clearer than words.
- Keep a **translation app** handy– a good translation app can be a lifesaver when gestures, illustrations and written cards aren't quite enough. Practice beforehand and try both voice and text features to determine which one works best.
- Mix and match your methods– **the more ways you communicate, the better.** Combine visual, verbal, and physical approaches to ensure everyone feels included.

EXPLORE

Picture yourself outdoors needing to gather the group — what call feels right to you?

A bird song, wolf howl, or simple whistle? Give it a try. Make it louder, then softer, and notice how it feels.

You might experiment with a bell, flute, or natural sounds like rustling leaves or tapping stones. These work beautifully to signal transitions or mark the start and finish of activities.

Experiment with your gestures – how might you show: Listen... Smell... Touch... See... Imagine... Feel...? Connect with each sense yourself and notice what your hands naturally do—how they move when you're truly listening or gently exploring. Practice these movements, letting them flow naturally.

Rather than explaining message, simply demonstrate it whilst working with your group.

