Before You Say…

“They didn’t respond.” Or did we interrupt?

THE MOMENT

A member of staff offers a switch opportunity. They wait. A visitor enters and starts speaking to the supporting adult. The adult looks away. The moment passes.

What do we actually know?

We know the opportunity was interrupted. We do not know whether the person would have responded, what they were processing, or what the interruption changed.

NOTICE

What was happening immediately before the interruption? What individual cues might we have missed?

QUESTION

Did we allow enough processing time? Was the person comfortable and able to access the switch?

TRY NEXT TIME

Agree a quiet signal, protect the waiting period, and revisit the opportunity when appropriate.

A missed response is not the same as a lack of communication.

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A five-minute team discussion

Use with new staff, colleagues and visiting professionals.

01 What moments need protecting?

Think about object cues, switch opportunities, anticipation, choice-making, rest and recovery.

02 How will visitors know?

Agree how to signal “please wait” kindly without excluding essential care.

03 What can wait?

Identify conversations and non-urgent questions that can happen outside or later.

04 What is individual to this person?

Consider their processing time, fatigue, sensory preferences, communication and clinical care plan.

Team agreement: One thing we will do differently this week…

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