

Partner assisted scanning and communication boards

Partner assisted scanning (PAS) is a way for someone with little or no speech to communicate effectively by choosing words, letters, or messages from a board or screen.

One person (“the partner”) points to or reads out choices. The person with MND signals when the correct one is reached.

There are many boards to choose from. This resource has a few to get you started. They can be printed or used on a screen. You can also make your own. Boards are available in different languages and can be produced in two languages.

About this guide

This guide is part of the *speech and communication in MND* series of guides and practical tools. This series was developed with MND Queensland, people living with MND, and their carers to help prepare for and adjust to speech changes, get support, and stay connected.

Scan to learn more



How to do partner assisted scanning (PAS)

Prepare

1 Agree on a signal

- Decide together what the “Yes” signal is (e.g. sound, eye blink, tap). “No” is usually no sound or movement.
- Practice together first.

2 Get set up

- Sit/stand where you can see each other and the board clearly (good light, glasses on if needed).
- Reduce noise and distractions.
- Have something to write on nearby.

Start PAS

3 Start slowly

- Explain the board and how you will assist scanning.
- e.g. “I’ll point to the rows first starting at the top, signal when you want one of the options on that row”.

4 Start scanning and watch for signal

- Start at the top, point to or say the colour of each row of the board.
- Pause long enough for the person to give their “Yes” signal.
- When they say “Yes,” stop on that row.

5 Scan within the row

- Now point to or say each item in that row, one by one.
- Pause each time and watch for “Yes.”
- When they say “Yes,” that is the choice.

6 Check and confirm

- Repeat the choice back (“You picked WATER, is that right?”).
- Wait for a “Yes”.

PAS is easy to learn. Follow these steps to get started straight away

Helpful tips

- Always wait long enough – don’t rush.
- If you miss a signal, start that row again.
- If the person looks tired, pause and give them time to rest.
- Be patient and encouraging.
- Try different boards and make your own.

Remember: The partner is only the helper. The person with MND is always in charge of the message.

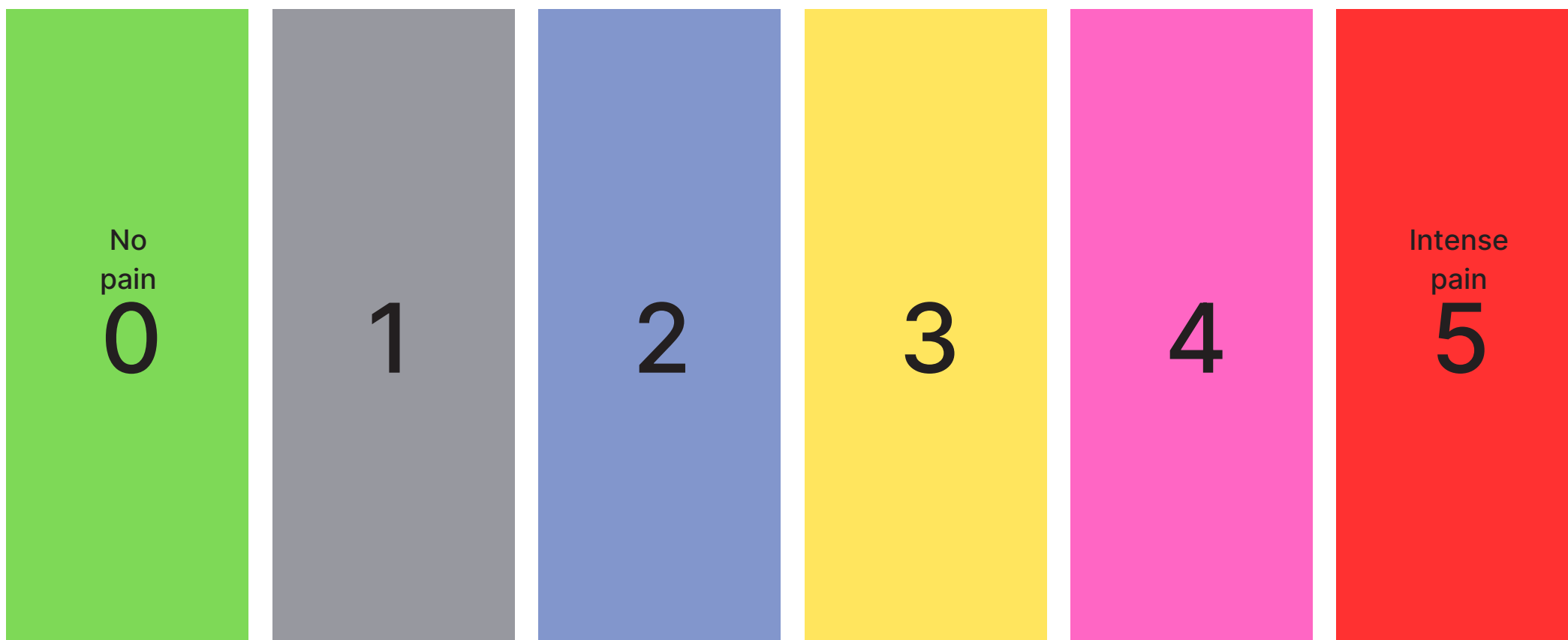
General communication board

Emergency	Can't breathe	Choking	Pain	Bathroom	Sick		
Needs	Rest	Stop	Quiet	Reposition	Person	Thirsty	Hungry
Move	Body	Head	Arms	Legs	Hips	Wheelchair	
Feelings	Good	Bad	Worried	Happy	Sad	Anxious	Excited
Things to do	Watch TV	Read	Movie	Visit	Coffee	Nap	Social media
Leave me alone						Help me spell it	Something else

The pain scale runs from 0 to 5, with 0 representing no pain, and 5 being the worst pain.

Pain scale

The communicator can either point to the number, or the partner can say each number aloud until the communicator indicates “yes” with the established signal.



Spell it board

A	B	C	D	Yes	No
E	F	G	H	Help	Something else
I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Pain scale board	Secretion board	General board			

Secretion management board

Can't Breathe	Short of Breath	Anxious / Panicky	Slow Down More Time	Mistake	Start Over
Suction	Cough Assist	Wipe / Clear Saliva	Cloth	Yes	No
Sit Up	Adjust Recliner	Adjust Bed	Reposition Me	BiPap Mask On	BiPap Mask Off
Mouth Care	Lip Balm	Mouth Spray	Swab	Tissue Spray	Atropine Drops
Stop	More	Carer		Help me spell it	Something else

Secretion management - lite board

**Can't
Breathe**

Suction

**Cough
Assist**

Sit Up

**BiPap
On**

**BiPap
Off**

**Mouth
Care**

**Mouth
Spray**

Lip Balm

Swab

Yes

No

Stop

**Something
else**

Hospital board

Breathing	Pain	Anxious / Panicky	Stop	Mistake	Start over
I need	I feel	I want	Slow down More time	Carer	More
BiPap	Medication	Catheter	Feeding Tube		
Alphabet Board	General Board	Secretion Board	Ask Yes/No Questions	Help me spell it	Something else



A	B	C	D	Yes	No
E	F	G	H	Help	Something else
I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z