



**Choice Care Group**

Positive Outcomes for People with Complex Needs

# Guide to using Intensive Interaction

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## **Introducing intensive interaction to residential care settings**

Here is a short introduction to using Intensive Interaction; thinking about what it is, who it is for; the purpose of II; and how to implement it.

## What is Intensive Interaction?

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Intensive Interaction is an approach that was developed to reach people who are not always happy to be in the company of other people. They may be uncommunicative and withdrawn – engaging in stereotypical repetitive behaviours.

‘A specific interactive approach to facilitating the development of social and communication abilities in people with severe (and complex) learning disabilities based on the model of caregiver-infant interaction’.

*(Nind and Hewett, 2001)*

## Purpose of Intensive Interaction

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- To enjoy the wonder, joy and fulfilment of communication and relationships and to enjoy each other’s company more.
- To help individuals become more confident and competent at communicating.
- It can open up a variety of other experiences.
- Being with individuals on their level, and respecting their developmental level.
- To reduce challenging behaviour.

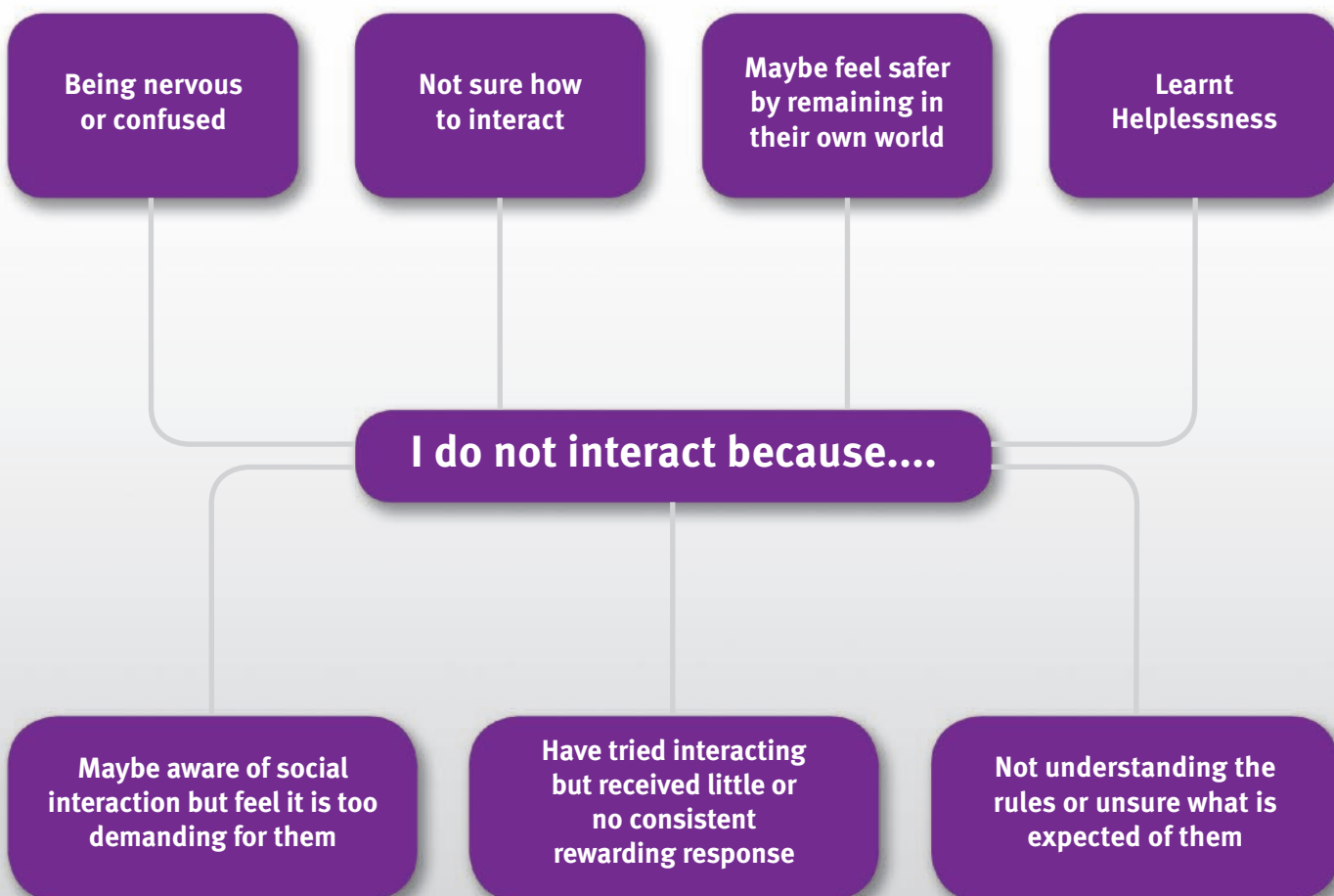


## Development of Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction was developed by Nind and Hewett in the 1980s through direct working practice with children with SLD in a residential setting.

They found that the structured educational approach just did not work for many pupils and that establishing a relationship became the key to aiding learning and improving quality of life. The approach was built on the basis of Ephraim's 'Augmented Mothering' theory, i.e. enhancing how we develop as a child with the help of our parent(s) or caregiver(s). Results showed that II worked to improve communication regardless of age or gender.

## Why might service users not communicate?



## How to use and/or get going with Intensive Interaction

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- Do not rush! - relax, respond, enjoy.
- Allow yourself to absorb - be subjective and learn about the positive things in the person's behaviour and lifestyle.
- Are you already half-way there? Lots of the skills used in II are things we do naturally.
- Establish a baseline - make a video or observe the person first.
- Find time and make this quality time.
- Seize the opportunity – do Intensive Interaction during care tasks, quiet moments etc.
- Adjust to the person.
- Where is the person most comfortable?
- Are they in the right mood?
- Be available.
- Tune in.
- Celebrate and welcome new behaviours.
- Try not to bombard.
- Create and repeat familiar interactions.



## What can we respond to?

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- Vocalisations
- Other noises made with mouth
- Other noises
- Movements
- Facial expressions
- Physical contact
- Stereotyped behaviours

## How do we respond?

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- Imitating
- Joining in
- By saying or doing something
- Being dramatic
- Non-verbal responses
- Pausing

## How does Intensive Interaction work?

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- By progressively developing enjoyable and relaxed interaction sequences
- By frequent repetition which gradually grows in duration, complexity and sophistication
- By the same principles as a baby learns to communicate in its first year
- Sessions should therefore be: intense, frequent, fun, playful and enjoyable



## Intensive Interaction offers us a way to 'Restore the Balance'...

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### Finally...

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"....most of us already have most of the skills and abilities the approach requires ..... it's more about facilitating learning"

*Nind and Hewett (1994)*

#### Further information and reading

- [www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk](http://www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk) - Intensive Interaction website
- A Practical Guide to Intensive Interaction (Nind and Hewett), BILD publishers.