**How to Guide:
Intensive Interaction**

1. **Before you start:** Make sure there is nothing more pressing that you need to be paying your attention to so you can focus on interacting.
2. **The purpose** of Intensive Interaction is to **develop social interaction** in a way that is familiar and comfortable for your student using body language and imitation. We join their world for a while rather than expecting them to cope with our busy and confusing world.
3. **The rules:** there are only a few rules for intensive interaction and they are all focused around connecting with the individual person.

**Be in the moment:**  we need to think in terms of ‘listening with all our senses’ to any small movements, gestures or sounds and especially, to focus on what your student is doing at this particular moment.

**Be expectant:** think about your own body language. Position yourself next to and slightly below your student if you can, and in a position where it is easy for them to make eye contact as and when they want to. Use an ‘expectant face’ – the kind of look you would use when you were ‘talking’ to a baby or very young child.

**Learn their repertoire:** we start by imitating their movements and sounds (though not any undesirable ones!). In order to develop from their inner language to language we can share, we can move on to responding with a different familiar gesture or sound. This develops the concept of a conversation within familiar bounds and can help with sensory overload situations.

*“…responding in terms that are meaningful to the person confirms what the person is doing. Donna Williams speaks of the relief when in the midst of sensory chaos, she recognises an element of her own language. She says that it is like having a life belt thrown to her in a stormy sea. (Williams 1993)”*

**Have fun!** If you show pleasure in the interaction, your student is likely to respond by enjoying the session too. It will reduce stress and anxiety for both parties if you go with the flow and have fun ☺