



# I am...

## Digital Story Guides

This guidance shows how to produce a short digital story to support you with transitions. A digital story is a short video (1-3 minutes) that shows typical behaviours for you. The stories are based mainly on **your interests and exploration** rather than what adults suggest or staged activities. They help give adults who know you and will meet you soon, information about who you are, what you like and what you may want support with.

### How: 4 key steps

#### Step 1: Mapping

Create a mind map with staff: include what you like, enjoy, dislike, and the things you find more challenging. Your voice is the most important here.

#### Step 2: Filming

Using the ACoRNS digital stories “I am..” framework, plan where you will take your videos. The focus is on environments and activities that are meaningful for you. Next, take some video clips of you over a few weeks or months. You can use small wearcams, a video camera, or a tablet PC. Ask staff to help you store the videos securely. You can film this yourself and be involved in planning what and where to film.

#### Step 3: Describing

Use the mind map and the video footage to describe yourself in short ‘I am...’ statements like the examples on page 2.

#### Step 4: Editing

Use the ‘I am...’ descriptions that you write to select video clips that best show your characteristics or behaviours. Try to present your views and perspectives as meaningfully as possible.

### Mapping: 7 areas to focus on

#### 1. Spaces

**Where do you like to be or explore?**

Outdoor: the playing fields, playground, benches, going for walks.

Inside: at tables or on a sofa, any activities planned by you or your peers, subject classrooms, library, specific staff members office.

#### 2. People and interactions

### **How do you like to spend your time and who do you interact with?**

You will interact in different ways with staff, other students and friends. You may also like to spend time by yourself. Interactions can be led by you or adult-led.

## **3. Independence and agency**

### **What do you choose to do for yourself?**

This can include exploring, requesting, initiating, choosing, or deciding, acting upon an interest or desire.

## **4. Objects and interests**

### **What are you really interested in and like doing?**

Look out for preferred books, activities, use of school equipment, clothing, use of outdoor spaces, and things you like or don't like the sound or touch of.

## **5. Communication and expression**

### **In what ways do you express yourself**

This could be talking or communicating without words (body language, different sounds) and directed at yourself or others. Who do you choose to communicate to?

## **6. Support**

### **What behaviours show where you need support?**

Include some ideas of the areas where you need support to encourage your improvement. For example, support with lesson transitions, lunch or break time, spending time with other students or staff, or things that help you learn in lessons.

## **7. Skills and capabilities**

### **What are you good at?**

There are many things that could be shown here e.g. art, sports, science, maths, humour, storytelling, specific subject interests, public speaking, helping others, computing, specific school subjects, hobbies outside of school, and extra-curricular activities.

# **Describing**

Once you've created a mind map, you can create your story. Consider which characteristics are most important to understand who you are, beyond the label of autism.

From these, you can create a story from your viewpoint using some of the phrases below. We used five phrases for each story, but you can use as many as you feel are needed. You may not be able to show on video all of the 'I am...' statements.

Here is an example.

I am... Callum

I am a strong-willed and friendly boy. I say hello to people. I like football and eating pizza. I am good at running. I feel nervous when I have to walk in a busy corridor to my next lesson.

## **Example phrases to inform your ‘I am...’ stories**

Below is an idea you can use to inform your story – it includes the kind of phrases that you could use to develop your own ‘I am... story’

- I am Noah and I am kind
- I like to play Xbox games
- I want to get a new bedroom that’s a bit bigger
- I try really hard at swimming
- I hear giggling key rings
- I see red noses
- I am good at running (kind of)
- I say I love my dog
- I feel afraid of new places
- I worry about being away from home
- I wonder what auntie Lola is doing now

## **Filming and Editing**

### **Before you film...**

Make sure you ask other members of staff whether they are happy to be filmed and get permission from the parents of all young people who might be filmed before you start. You might need to make sure you don’t film some staff or students if they do not want to be filmed or have not given permission to be filmed. The staff working with you on this video can help you with this.

### **Filming**

You can take video footage using a wearcam or using a mobile, tablet or camera. We found the wearcams really useful for hearing your voice (giggling, humming, murmuring, talking) as well as seeing the world from your point of view.

You will also need a memory card. It’s best to try and keep clips short (30 secs – 2 mins), as this will make it easier to find the shots you want to include when editing.

Longer clips may also be too large to upload to web-based video editing programmes.

Store videos in a safe place that has been agreed with school.

### **Editing**

You may find it useful to plan it out before you try to edit together your footage.

For each sentence in the story, you will need to add a slide with the “I am” phrase followed by a clip or several clips to demonstrate that phrase, almost like a picture book.

Plan by taking note of which files contain the shots you want to include for each “I am” phrase, and their rough start and end times.

In some cases, you may want to increase the volume on individual clips to make sure that you can hear clearly.

Make sure you check the format of your video files to fit with the type of files your video editing programme needs.