

# Everyone's First Language

What does it mean to belong to history if you do not communicate through text, speech, or symbols?

People with **profound and multiple learning disabilities** (PMLD) have severe cognitive disabilities, often alongside complex physical and medical needs. Many do not use speech or symbols to communicate. This is often framed as absence. It is not.

We have built history and heritage on the presumption of shared language, cognition, and time. In doing so, we have left people behind, and we forgot how to communicate.

So we begin again.



## The sensory is everyone's first language.

What happens when we begin again?

- Co-created sensory encounters using the Ten Sensory Archetypes
- Multi-sensory prompts (rhythm, light, texture, scent)
- Facilitated presence, not extracted narrative
- Meaning held in response, not verbalisation
- Towards a sensory archive of experience



### The Ten Sensory Archetypes



Lights | Mirrors | Fabrics | Smells | Water | Bubbles  
Tactile Trays | Tastes | Soundmakers | Movement

When we begin here, we do not design for a few. We create conditions where everyone can come with us, and everyone can contribute.

Communication is no longer something to access. It is something we already hold.

It is our shared and lived humanity.

What becomes possible if we begin before words and return to the body first?

Sensory Heritage, Identity, & Testimony Without Words

Julia Collar | [www.collarandcuffs.org](http://www.collarandcuffs.org)  
[julia@collarandcuffs.org](mailto:julia@collarandcuffs.org)



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