

7 keys to successful communication

Good communication helps patients, their families, carers and consumers understand their care needs and to make decisions. Follow these simple steps for good communication.



1 Introduce yourself

Be welcoming, smile, use open body language, eye contact, positive posture and facial expressions. Be clear with your intentions.



2 Consider language and cultural needs

Ask if an interpreter is needed. Listen to the person's story.

Ask if any family members need to be included in conversations.



3 Use plain language

Keep sentences short.
Use words they use and check understanding.
Avoid jargon and acronyms.

4 Speak clearly and calmly

Check your tone, volume and intensity. Take your time and be patient.



5 Listen carefully and ask questions

Be present. Listen with care, patience, respect and empathy. Reassure, summarise back and clarify as needed.
Be self-aware of your responses based on your own cultural background, attitudes and values.

6 Limit content

Limit information to 3-5 points. Watch their body language to check they are not feeling overwhelmed.

"We've got one more test to do. If it's ok, you can go home. If it's not ok, we'll talk about next steps".



7 Use visual aids

Draw diagrams, use pictures, brochures and models to help others understand.

