

Communicating with people who have diverse needs

Points on communication with non-English speaking person

- Identify specific language need
- Use simple words, assistance of "word pictures"
- Moderate speed of speech
- Use short sentences
- Allow time for questions, clarification
- Summarise and ensure message was understood
- Be patient and show compassion in a demanding situation
- Arrange for provision of interpreter (Trust staff or contracted services)
- Match language, dialect, gender and culture when possible
- Ensure interpreter understands message to be conveyed
- Ensure interpreter is aware of meaning of technical terms
- Be aware of your own racial/cultural attitudes
- Make arrangements for follow-up session

Points on face-to-face communication with deaf or hard of hearing person

- Identify their specific need
- Use plain language
- Do not shout
- Maintain eye contact, look direct at person
- Keep hands away from your mouth (person may be able to lip read)
- Use pictures, symbols to highlight text
- Ensure background noise is kept to a minimum
- Give people time and respect – be discreet
- Arrange for provision of a certified British sign language interpreter
- Check availability of portable Minicom for users of hearing aids (advise T setting to receive transmission)
- Provide support of text phone, text television, fax machine when possible
- Ensure hearing aid batteries available on wards

Points on communicating with a blind or visually impaired person

- Introduce yourself
- Address person by name
- Lightly touch their arm to indicate you are speaking to the person
- Offer to assist to relocate them if necessary
- Describe the layout of the area
- Give easy to follow instructions
- Inform person you are about to leave when finished with the conversation
- Provide information on audible format when possible

Points on communicating with people who have learning disability

- Introduce yourself
- Address person by name
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Give instructions easy to follow
- Use symbol language, miming if necessary
- Don't finish sentences for the person
- Don't be patronising in language or tone
- Give person time and respect
- Check for signs of distress, be reassuring
- Treat people as individuals

