



Communication check-in guide

These 2 tools help you communicate in ways that work best for each older person. They also support you to reflect on your communication and build respectful, person-centred care.

1. Communication preferences checklist

Before talking with an older person, take a moment to review their communication preferences. This information is usually recorded during their assessment.

Step through the checklist to:

- make sure you have read and understood their preferences
- check how they like to communicate on this occasion (e.g. pace, language, support needs or preferences)
- feel confident you are approaching them in the right way.

Taking this step helps the older person feel comfortable, understood, and respected.

2. The 5 simple steps to show you care

These 5 simple reminders will support you in your daily work. You can come back to them at any time to check in with yourself and reflect on how you communicate with older people.

They are a helpful guide to support good communication and build strong, respectful relationships. You may like to download this sheet so you can use it during your day.

It reminds you how to:

- be present
- communicate clearly
- build trust through small, everyday actions.

Why this matters

Everyone communicates differently. When you take the time to understand and adjust to each person, it helps them feel:

- heard
- safe
- valued.

For information about culturally safe communication and care, view the [Everyday practice checklist on cultural safety for aged care workers](#)

Checklist

Open and clear communication helps you provide respectful, rights-based care.

Use this checklist to pause and think about how you are communicating with the older person. You can come back to it over time to reflect on your approach, build trust, and give the older person opportunities to share if their needs or preferences have changed.

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- Do I know the ways the older person prefers to communicate?
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- Have I recently asked about the older person's needs and preferences? Do I know if their needs and preferences have changed?
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- Do I need to update the older person on any concerns or questions they have previously raised?
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- Have I documented all the older person's preferences in their case notes and/or care plan?
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- Have I taken steps to show respect for the older person's needs, preferences and requests?
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- Do I understand (or have I asked) what makes the older person that I care for feel safe?
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- Do I understand any potential triggers for the older person that could cause them distress, anxiety or behaviour change?
-
- Have I given the older person time to respond when they are ready. They do not have to talk to me or give me an answer straight away.
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Reflect after you talk with the older person

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- Did I introduce myself and explain what I was there to assist them with, before I started to provide them with care?
-
- Did I stop and ask them how they are feeling?
-
- Did I actively listen and did my actions and responses reflect that I listened?
-
- Did I do what I said I was going to do? Did I do it when I said that I was going to do it?
-
- Did I receive any direct or indirect feedback, suggestions or ideas from the older person today? How will I integrate this feedback into my daily practice?
-

5 simple steps to show you care

1

Body language

*Face the person, smile, and show you are **focused** on them.*

***Be present** in a way that feels respectful to them.*



2

Ask

*Ask simple questions like ‘**How are you?**’*

Find out what they need and what matters to them.



3

Listen

***Stop and listen** carefully without interrupting.*

This shows you care, helps them feel heard, and builds trust.

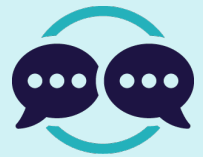


4

Talk

***Speak clearly and kindly.** Reassure them that they have been heard.*

Explain what you are doing so they understand.



5

Stay connected

***Update** them on what is happening with any questions or concerns they raise.*

*This **builds trust** and helps avoid worry or escalation.*

Do what you say you will do.

