

Tips for Communicating with People with Development Disabilities

Good communication tips for any situation:

- Always approach from the front so you do not startle the person
- Determine how close the person wants you to be
- Communicate in a calm place with little noise or distraction
- Always identify yourself and use the person's name
- Speak slowly-- using a lower voice is calming and easier to understand
- Be aware and adjust your approach if the person has a hearing impairment

Respond positively

- Care plan should focus on encouraging positive interests and activities of the client.
- Ensure care plan includes actions to take when client is resistant
- Focus on the least restrictive approaches
- Assess the person's behavior in various activities to identify positive responses that may be more effective in the facility
- Investigate the need for added activities in the facility, taking into account the person's likes and dislikes
- Complete behavioral assessments on all clients, recommend appropriate activities and provide comprehensive training to caregivers on conducting these activities

Offer choices

- Positive communication includes responding to the needs and wishes of the resident in a way that encourages dignity and respect

Be positive

- Demonstrate calm and understanding
- Keep a cheerful, positive, friendly, playful, and encouraging attitude

Work collaboratively

- Acknowledge the good work of others in meeting the challenges of the job.
- Check with other staff members to develop an individual program that ensures service design and delivery that includes an appropriate active treatment program
- Document your observations to improve a person's individual program plan and update appropriately as behaviors change
- Ensure client and guardian are aware of rights and procedures for reporting
- Direct care staff and supervisors should work collaboratively and provide input regularly as part of patients' ongoing evaluations.