



Communication inclusive speaking checklistⁱ

Section 1: Speaking to people.

1. Plan what you want to say without worrying about how you will say it.
2. Chunk your message into sections, one section for each key point.
3. Put the key points in the order people need to know them.
4. Break each key point into short, simple sentences that each say 1 or 2 things.
5. Be politely direct. Avoid lots of ifs, maybes, perhaps...
6. Use "Active" sentences. "We will do this" not "This will be done by us."
7. Use local, everyday words whenever you can. No Jargon, no abbreviations.
8. Be seen. Be heard.
9. Show people what you mean.

Section 2: People speaking to you.

1. Look and listen out for people expressing themselves in different ways including facial expression, gestures, body language and objects.
2. Give people time to take their turn.

For more detailed guidance read on.



Communication inclusive step by step speaking guide

Use this guide for all spoken communication including talking to colleagues, interviewing, answering the phone, speaking at meetings, and giving presentations.

1. It gets easier to apply these steps to everyday communication the more you practice.
- 2.

Section 1: Speaking to people.

1. **Plan** what you want to say without worrying about how you will say it. A note of your key points can help you keep to the point when you are talking.

2. **Chunk your message into sections, one section for each key point.**

3. **Put the key points in the order people need to know them.**

For example, when you first meet someone, a good order might be

- your name and job title
- the purpose of the meeting
- the order you will work through the meeting
- what you would like the listener to do
- start going through each section in order.

4. **Break each key point into short sentences** that each say 1 or 2 things.

Be politely direct.

The speaking style you use depends on

- your personal style,
- how formal you want to be
- your listeners.

It is more inclusive to

- Minimise the amount you say and how long you talk.
- Avoid sentences with lots of “and,” “however,” “maybe” which make for long and complicated sentences.
- Avoid asking lots of questions one after the other.
- Avoid multiple or sudden changes of topic or quick asides.

Use “Active” sentences.

“Passive” sentences are more difficult to understand. An active sentence begins with who is doing something, then says what they are doing and ends with what they are doing it to. For example,
Do say “I will write the report.”

Do not say “The report will be written by me.”

Use local, everyday words whenever you can.

Use the same words as your colleagues to describe things. For example, names for buildings and forms.

Avoid:

- professional jargon and words people might not hear every day
- long words with more than 2-3 syllables.
- abbreviations or acronyms
- metaphors such as “couch potato” and “this is the icing on the cake.’

5. Be seen.

If you are communicating face to face in person or on a video call

- Have light facing you rather than behind you.
- Sit or stand close enough so listeners can see your eyes, face, gestures and body language and you can see and hear their reactions.
- Reduce irrelevant visual distractions as much as possible.

6. Be heard.

- Get close enough so people can hear you. Check they can hear you.
- Speak clearly but avoid shouting.
- Use a microphone for big groups or big rooms.
- Use venues with hearing loops.
- Avoid putting your hand to your face or over your mouth.
- Reduce irrelevant sound and visual distractions as much as possible.
- Use “captions” or subtitles on video calls and video recordings.

2. **Show people what you mean.** Use visual aids - objects, videos, pictures, photographs, cartoon drawings, icons, symbols, and the space you are in.

Visual aids help people to

- pay attention, focus on, and remember the topic of conversation
- understand especially when talking about things outside the “here and now”.
- express themselves by giving them something to point to when they talk.

3. **Use a BSL or other sign language interpreter** if requested and if your communication is for the public or an unknown audience.
 - Use a BSL interpreter for in person communication or on video calls.
 - Use “BSL Contact” on the phone or video call.

Section 2: People speaking to you.

1. **Look and listen out for people expressing themselves in different ways** including facial expression, gestures, body language and objects.

Enable and encourage people to use different ways to express themselves. For example, by writing, drawing or demonstrating what they mean.

2. **Make turn taking easy.**

- Take turns patiently – consciously give each person time to have their say.
- Avoid interrupting either by speaking or through your nonverbal expression.
- Avoid jumping in to fill a silence.
- Make it clear when it is the other persons turn by looking at them and pausing. Some people find it hard to know when it is their turn in a conversation.

ⁱ Communication inclusive speaking checklist and guide created and published by Communication Inclusion People Community Interest Company, 2023 www.communicationinclusionpeople.com