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# Tips for a Phone Conversation on a Regular Call

**Communicating on the phone can be hard for a person with a communication disability. It can also be hard for the person receiving the call. There are lots of things you can do to make the phone conversation successful.**

## Don't hang up!

- Pause for a moment! It sometimes takes the caller a bit longer to say hello. Some people with a communication disability may have speech that is unclear and others may use a communication device.
- If you hear an electronic voice, wait and listen! Staff might think it is a prank call, but this could be a person using a communication device.
- Listen carefully! The person might introduce themselves to help with the call.

## Be welcoming and friendly

- Be respectful.
- Be relaxed.
- Speak naturally - You don't have to talk loudly or slowly.

## Give the person enough time

- Give the caller plenty of time to respond. Waiting for long periods of time is okay.
- Do not interrupt while the person is talking or typing their message.
- If there is long silence:
  - Reassure the caller that you are still there and waiting for their response.
  - Don't fill the silence with more questions.
  - Wait for a response.

*Treat the person  
with dignity and  
respect*



## Don't make assumptions

- Avoid making assumptions about the caller, such as:
  - The caller doesn't understand you.
  - The caller has an intellectual disability.
  - The caller is not capable of handling the call.
  - Avoid being patronising in the way you speak - treat the person with dignity.

## Make your language easy to understand

- Talk in short, clear sentences.
- Pause between sentences.
- Ask one question at a time and wait for a reply.
- Talk about one thing at a time.
- Use simple words.

## Consider background noise

- Find a quieter place if possible.
- Turn off the radio or television.
- Inform staff around you if you need a quiet environment.
- Summarise key pieces of information from this call.

## At the end of the call

- Be certain the person has the information they need before you hang up.
- Ask the caller:
  - "Have you got any other questions?"
  - "Can I help you with anything else today?"

**If you would like to know more about communication access, please contact Scope's Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre**

**Phone:** 1300 4 72673

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