

Top tips for reasonable adjustments when consulting with people with learning disability and autistic people



Preparation is key. Appointment invites should be accessible. Explain what the appointment is about. Find out how best to contact the patient- letter, phone, video call. For annual health check use pre-checklist and send easy read information



Ask the person what reasonable adjustments they need, what works for them. It can be difficult for some people to express what they want/need. If people are unable to express their preferences speak to someone who knows them well. Keep a note in the records for next time!



Is the person able to wait for the appointment? Consider first and last appointments. Where is the best place to wait? Can waiting in the car and being called in last minute help? Don't forget to ensure everyone knows where the patient is!



Time – is extra time required for the appointment? How long can the person engage for? It may be useful to split the health check/appointment. Consider if the person needs time to process information so the consultation might be much slower!



Environment – check that the person is comfortable in the environment – waiting and consulting room. Consider if it is too noisy, overstimulating, lighting? Can something be adjusted?



If the person is being supported and you feel that the supporter doesn't know the person enough, suggest booking a further appointment with someone who knows them well.



Speak to the person – even if there is difficulty gaining someone's attention. If you want to speak to a supporter, ask the person if they are happy for you to speak to their supporter.



Speak clearly and slowly, facing the person, to show that they have your undivided attention.



Use short sentences and easy language. Use words the person is used to, like heart and poo instead of cardiac and faeces/stool. Pictures and diagrams (body maps) may help the person to explain their symptoms.



Find an interest that will keep the person engaged – this builds trust and may help to continue the discussion. It might help for example a TV programme may have someone who has experienced the same diagnosis.



Don't focus on just the spoken language. Observations from body language is important and can be questioned.



Listen to what the person is saying. Even if you feel that what they are describing isn't accurate or difficult to understand. They are trying to communicate something, and this may be the only way that they can express what is happening.



Continuity of care: Seeing clinician helps building a trusting relationship. It is difficult for people with a learning disability to see a lot of different people. Knowing the person is helpful for the clinician, the better you know the person the easier it will be to consult with them!

Reasonable adjustments are a legal duty under the Equality Act

Contact the Adult Learning Disability Health Service (ALDHS) advice and guidance line: **0300 124 5888** Email: sirona.bcladtadvice@nhs.net

Further guidance can be found on REMEDY: <https://remedy.bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/adults/learning-disabilities>