

Tips for positive communication



Clear communication can help build and maintain healthy relationships.

Good communication is an important part of all relationships. All relationships have ups and downs, but a healthy communication style can make it easier to deal with conflict and can build stronger and healthier relationships.

Tips for healthy communication

- Listen carefully to what the other person is saying and double-check that you have understood correctly.
- Take turns speaking and avoid interrupting or speaking over the other person.
- Use respectful, neutral language, and speak clearly and calmly.
- Remember communication is not just talking; be mindful of your non-verbal communication cues such as posture, tone of voice and facial expressions.
- Take a break if you need to; or take a few deep breaths, very slowly, before speaking
- If it helps you, write down things you want to say to prepare for when it's your turn

Communication Tool – using 'I-statements'

Communicating how you feel to others can be difficult. Using 'I' statements is a tool that can help you communicate to others about your experiences and how it's affecting you while respecting the other person's feelings.

A good '**I** Statement' clearly states your own feelings, provides an explanation that will help the other person understand how their action/s affect you and offers a solution. It consists of three parts:

1. Describe the problem
2. State how you feel
3. Offer a solution

For example:

Blaming statement ✗

"...You should make more time to see me..."

'I-statement' ✓

"...I feel sad and lonely that I don't see you very often. Could we arrange to see each other once a month?"



Elder Abuse Prevention Support Services can help older people and their families to:

- Work together to develop solutions that are realistic for everyone
- Develop communication strategies that enable them to work together and make important decisions for the future
- Discuss challenging and important family matters, including residential care, health concerns for the older person
- Hear everyone's voice and empower the older person by paying careful attention to their needs and wishes
- Reduce the risk of financial, physical, sexual, psychological or emotional abuse, exploitation or neglect.

How can we help?

- Information, support and referrals
- Counselling
- Facilitating a safe and respectful family or group meeting

- Developing a safety plan
- Responding to family conflict in ways that improve relationships

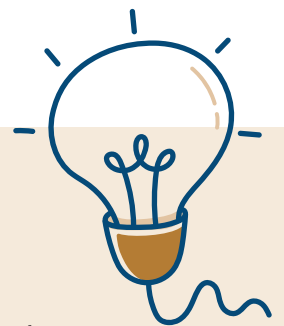
We can also offer support from our Aboriginal staff and/or external interpreter services.

Who can use this service?

This service is for people aged 65 years and over, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over, where there is:

- Concerns for the older person that they are experiencing abuse, mistreatment, exploitation or neglect
- Concerns for the older person that they are at risk of experiencing abuse, mistreatment, exploitation or neglect.
- Informed consent from the older person to engage with the service.

Family member, friends or carers can also contact us if they have a concern about an older person who may be vulnerable to abuse, exploitation or neglect



Tips for managing conflict with communication

- ✓ Save the conversation for a calm moment
- ✓ Use gentle body language and tone of voice
- ✓ Be respectful
- ✓ Describe the problem clearly
- ✓ Focus on the problem, not the person
- ✓ Know when to take a time out
- ✓ Take an attitude of teamwork and problem solving, rather than arguing or blaming
- ✓ Work towards a resolution
- ✓ Plan what you're going to say