

Resources for supporters

Communication tips



Supportive relationships are built on good communication.

If you have good communication skills, you can clearly talk about your thoughts and feelings.

Keep communicating, connecting and checking in

It is important to create space to connect and chat. Here are some tips to keep that communication going:

- Check in regularly with each other eg the beginning and the end of each week.
- Make this 'check-in' a priority in your day or week.
- Face to face check-ins are good; you can also use texts and Apps to keep connecting and communicating with each other.

Active listening

Active listening means you are showing a genuine interest in someone; you want to understand what they are saying, what they mean. To listen actively, means you will:

- Give people your attention, you will take turns speaking and make time to listen without interrupting.
- Listen to understand each other.
- Hear what is important or troubling the other person.

Communicating with a purpose

Sometimes a person who wants to tell you what happened to them wants to:

- Update you by letting you know what is going on – they don't want anything else from you at that time.
- Talk to you about something that is causing them distress or frustration – they don't want you to do anything but to listen to their distress or frustration.
- Ask for your help as they look at options.
- Seek out your guidance.



The person may not be asking for you to find the solution. Knowing someone is there to listen, someone who cares will help them.

It can be helpful to ask “How can I best help you?”

People communicate in different ways at different times

- Everyone is different and communicates differently.
- Sometimes people need time to think things through or work out what they want to say.
- Sometimes going for a walk or watching a sporting event or program together will be the most powerful form of communication.

Prioritise supportive communication

Try to always speak and act in ways where everyone feels:

- They are appreciated, valued and respected.
- Each person's skills and choices are acknowledged and respected.

When you are talking about distressing topics, make sure

- You are aware of each other's energy levels, call 'Time Out' if energy levels drop.
- You see the importance in talking about positive things – everyday activities, fun and enjoyable things you each may have done.

When you are with someone who has been sexually abused when they were a child, remember:

- They might find some topics difficult to talk about.
- Communicating and acting with kindness will be good for them and for you.
- Communicating, connecting and checking in, will be very important.

