

# Communication tips for talking to autistic adults

1

## Use their name

This will help you to gain the person's attention and to tell them that you are talking to them specifically.

2

## Ask about their preferred method of communication

A person may understand the content of the conversation but may not respond verbally. Give them the option to respond using alternative communication methods, such as texting or writing things down.

3

## Allow for processing time

Say less and speak slower. It may help to pause between words and phrases to give the person time to process what you have said and to give them a chance to think of a response.

4

## Ask questions

If you ask a question, wait for a response. If someone doesn't respond immediately, do not assume they haven't heard or understood you. Try to avoid asking too many questions in a short timeframe. Also try to avoid asking open-ended questions by making your questions more specific. For example, ask "Did you enjoy your walk on the beach last Wednesday?" rather than "How was your week?". It may also help to structure your question by offering options or choices.

5

## Take time to listen

Taking the time to listen lets a person know that you care about and support them. If you do not understand what the person is saying, ask them to clarify what they are trying to convey.

6

### **Be clear**

Say what you mean and be literal, clear and concise. Avoid using irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions, idioms or exaggeration, as these can be taken literally. If you do use these things, explain what you have said, and be clear about what you really mean.

7

### **Rely less on non-verbal communication**

Non-verbal communication includes eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and body language.