

Getting the Initial Conversation Right for People Living with Dementia

This training session looked at how People Keeping Well partners can make the most of the initial conversations they are responsible for making to people living with dementia.

We explored in detail what a good and bad telephone call looks, sounds and feels like. We also looked at what people should be considering before, during and after a telephone call. Below is a summary of the key points.

DO'S	DONT'S
Ensure the environment is quiet, none distracting and private before you call	Make an initial phone call in a rush or when you are not focused
Read through a person's referral before making the call to get to know a bit about them	Make assumptions about a person based on gender, age, diagnosis or adopt a 'one size fits all' approach
Ensure that your conversation is structured and easy to follow	Use jargon, abbreviations, talk to quickly or give lots of information or questions at once
Account for any communication needs detailed on the referral e.g hard of hearing, better during the afternoon etc	Talk over or for somebody just because their communication needs may vary. For example, you may want to follow up with a letter or speak to a family member too
Enjoy the opportunity to get to know somebody new and find out about their life, their interests and what matters to them.	View the phone call as a task you have to do for the sake of it.
Follow up the call with actions you have said you will do. Whether that is making a referral, finding something out or calling someone back. Write up what has been said or done.	Don't offer to support somebody without following it through. This can be detrimental to their wellbeing and trust in you and other services.
Use the time after a call to reflect on what went well and what could go better next time with colleagues.	Don't try and improve your approach each time and become complacent.

