



## Communication and Conversation during Covid-19

PPE adds an extra 'layer' when communicating with our patients and each other. Facemasks make communication and conversation more challenging for patients.

- They cannot read your lips.
- They may not be able to hear you clearly.
- They cannot read all of your non-verbal communication.
- They may be confused by PPE and the reasons for its use.



### How you can help?

#### Be aware and prepare



Take a moment to **stop and prepare** yourself for the conversation.



Consider your own **communication style** and the information you want to give to the person.



If you need **pictures or written information** to support conversation, have them ready in advance.

Get a **pen and paper** in case you want to write something down.

#### Be calm



Approach the person from the front so they see you arrive. Position yourself at their **eye level**.



Use positive and calming **body language**. Give the person time to get used to you.

Tell them your **name**. If you have a sticker name badge with your picture, show it to them so they can see **the person behind the mask!**

#### Communicate clearly

- Reduce **background noise** (e.g. turn off the television).
- Ensure the person wears their **glasses/hearing aids** if they use them.
- Use **short simple sentences**. Use **gestures** to highlight key words.
- A mask can muffle your voice so **speak louder** if you need to.
- **Write down** words, show **pictures** or use **objects** if the person needs extra visual cues.
- If you are expressing an emotion, **name the emotion** (e.g. 'I'm happy to hear you had a good sleep', rather than simply smiling). The person cannot see your mouth.
- If the person has pre-existing communication difficulties, find out the best ways to support them from the SLT.

Remember, a bit of a chat is an important part of life so if you follow these few tips, you will make someone's day!