

# Talking with people by phone



<b>PREPARE</b>	<p>Right place – quiet, no interruptions. Right information – name of patient and relative; information to be shared; paper and pen. Right time – for you , for the person, for the situation.      Right words – think about what you'll say.</p>
<b>Opening</b>	<p>Hello, my name is.., I am calling from...., about (<i>patient name</i> ). I'm the (<i>role</i>) in the team.</p> <p>Please can I speak to (<i>name</i>)? Is this a good time for you or would later on be better?</p> <p>I'm sorry we are having to speak on the phone and not in person.</p>
<b>Tips on talking by phone</b>	<p>Imagine the person is sitting opposite you as you speak.      Use clear, simple terms; no jargon/ abbreviations</p> <p>Talk slowly in short sentences.      Use: <i>ask-talk-ask</i>      Pause often and check how the person is.</p> <p>Tone (kind), pitch (even) and pace (slower) really matter on the phone</p> <p>Listen for changes in tone, breathing, pitch or pace from the other person – tells you how they are doing.</p> <p>If things are not going so well, pause and restart. Apologise if they seem upset or confused. Ask them to tell you what they really mean or have not understood. Say how much it matters to you to help them as best you can.</p>
<b>Ending</b>	<p><b>Manage:</b> If you have talked for long enough, signpost ending: <i>We have a few minutes left....</i></p> <p><b>Summary:</b> <i>So, what we've talked about is....      I'm so sorry to have had to tell you this (sad) news..</i></p> <p><b>Check:</b> <i>As we are talking by phone, it's important for me to check what you've understood about what we've been saying .....      Is there anything else important you'd like to tell me just now...</i></p> <p><b>Plan:</b> <i>I wish we could have met face to face to talk about this....      So, what we've agreed is.....</i></p> <p><b>Safety net:</b> <i>Please call us back at this number and ask for x, if you have any questions or worries or if you change your mind about any of the plans we've made just now/ what I have told you...</i></p>
<b>FINISH</b>	<p>Record discussion in patient record; share plans with team. Remember follow-up actions and plan for them. Refresh – take time to debrief; seek support if needed.</p>