



Communication is a two-way process, but all too often the expectation is on the autistic person to change how they communicate with the non-autistic person. It is essential that the neurotypical person understands the communication style of the other person and adjusts accordingly. This will change for different individuals and for different contexts but this resource gives some ideas to consider.

## Supporting Communication: Change your style



1

### Slow down!

Some autistic people need more time to process verbal language so wait for a response and allow pauses in conversations.

2

### Say less!

If your communication style is to be very chatty, it can be difficult to adjust this, but for some autistic people, saying less can be very helpful. The more language used, the longer it may take some people to process, so it may help to keep things short and clear.

3

### Keep language consistent

If you need to repeat an instruction or question, say it in the same way you did the first time. Introducing different language can create confusion, for example 'Take a seat' can sound very different from 'Sit down'. Be consistent.

4

### Do not expect eye contact

Some autistic people find eye contact uncomfortable and unnecessary. They may be distracted by facial expressions, eye movements and lip movements and so find it easier to look away while listening. This then helps them to process the language.

5

### Use varied communication methods as needed

Find out about the person's communication methods. Do they use an Assistive Augmentative Communication system? Do they prefer to text, write or email? What kind of visual supports do they use?

6

### Choose your time

Observe the other person and consider if it is a good time to speak to them. As for anyone, if they seem uncomfortable or wish to be alone, do not force interaction.

These are general communication tips and will not apply to everyone. The key is to find out about the other person's communication style and then change your style to support a positive two-way interaction.