

Preparing for a 'what matters' conversation

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To prepare for a meaningful conversation with someone with a learning disability, you should find out:

- more about the person you're supporting
- who you need involve
- when to have the conversation
- where to have the conversation
- how to communicate with the person
- how to record and share the conversation.

Valuing people

Before you start to find out what matters, think about how you'll make sure you're valuing the person you're supporting. Here are some starting points:

- base your conversations on strengths – focus on what someone can do and what they enjoy, not what they can't do
 - Tailor the conversation to their interests and preferences.
- keep learning – be curious and take opportunities to find new ways to do things

- be creative – think of new ways to find out and record what’s important to the people you support
- do things with people, not to them – involve the people you’re supporting as much as possible and make them comfortable with every step of the process
- remember the little things – what seems small to us may be important to someone else
- don’t assume anything – everyone is different, so try to understand things from their point of view
- listen to the people who know the person best – they can be a valuable support circle
- risk isn’t always a barrier – discuss positive risk-taking with the person and their support network
 - You can find more information on [positive risk-taking on our website](#)
- prepare thoroughly – try to understand the person’s background, diagnosis, and any specific needs, because it will help you to tailor the conversation to their unique situation
- be empathetic and respectful – show empathy and respect for the person’s feelings and experiences. Validate their emotions and listen actively.
- be flexible and adaptable – you may need to change your way of working based on the person’s responses and needs
 - Flexibility is key to effective communication.
- follow up often – regularly review and update the information you collect to make sure it reflects the person’s current needs and preferences.