

Getting It Right In Reading - Top tips for a patient consultation

1. Ask the patient if they have a Health Passport
2. If not, find out the best way to communicate. Ask family, friends, or support workers for help. Remember that some people use signs and symbols as well as speech and those with autism may have very literal understanding of language. (see top tips for communication resource)
3. Listen to parents and carers, especially when someone has difficulty communicating. They can tell you which signs and behaviours indicate distress.
4. Beware that important medical symptoms can be ignored because they are seen as part of someone's disability or associated behaviour.
5. Don't make assumptions about a person's quality of life. They may be enjoying a fulfilling life.
6. Ask for help. Staff from the Community Learning Disability Team may be able to help or a charity like Reading Mencap who may already be involved with the patient.
7. Be clear on the law about capacity to consent. When people lack capacity, you are required to act in their best interests (The Mental Capacity Act 2005).
8. Don't give too much information too quickly (see top tips for communication resource).
9. Remember the Disability Discrimination Act. It requires you to make 'reasonable adjustments' so you may have to do some things differently to achieve the same health outcomes.
10. Complete the Health Action Plan in the patient's Health Passport it will help others who work with the patient.
11. Ask the patient's permission to add important information to their Summary Care Record, to help other services that may become involved with the patient.