

# Communication

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**Think back...**

What are the main challenges when  
**communicating**  
with teenagers and young adults?

# Main challenges

- ▶ Timing – A young person might need pre warning or an appointment
- ▶ Are you the right person to give the information?
- ▶ Does the young person want to be on their own or have parental involvement?
- ▶ Language
- ▶ Body Language

# Social factors

- ▶ The main challenge for us within our TYA service when it comes to communicating with young people
- ▶ Socioeconomic background
- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Substance use
- ▶ Homelessness
- ▶ Lack of familial support
- ▶ Prison
- ▶ Mental health

# Doc Brown 'Slang 101'(53)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ympI2mdABUM>



# Communicating with young people

1. Listen
2. Don't judge
3. Pay attention to the language you use
4. Have respect for young people's ideas
5. Compromise
6. Show care and concern
7. Learn to read non-verbal clues
8. Clarify what they tell you
10. Stick with it – perseverance and consistency

# Social factors

- ▶ Think outside the box
- ▶ One style does not fit all
- ▶ Put in extra effort wherever possible
- ▶ Be respectful of lifestyle
- ▶ Can you be flexible at all?
- ▶ Whole team approach/ team around

**1** Ask us where we would like to see you and how often – some children and young people might like to see you often so they can get to know you, others only when they need to.

**2**

Listen to us – if we want something and it can't happen, make sure we understand why.

**3** Help us to feel comfortable enough to talk to you – we've got to meet lots of different professionals and it can be hard.

**4** Answer your phone calls – and if you're not around please get back to us soon.

**5** Please turn up when you say you will – we know you will be busy but we feel let down if you are late or don't turn up.

**6** Respect how we are feeling, even if it doesn't seem major to you.

**7** Get to know us and show us you are really interested in us.

**8** Always do what you tell us you are going to, and never promise something you might not be able to do.

**9** Be there for us when we need you.

**10** Don't tell everyone everything - respect our confidentiality whenever this is possible.

# Engaging TYA patients: Don'ts

- ▶ Don't assume their concerns/issues are about the cancer diagnosis – consider their age/development and other personal stressors.
- ▶ Don't take things personally if they don't engage. Be available instead for indirect work/consultation/work with parents.
- ▶ Don't use jargon.
- ▶ Don't expect positive feedback – you may be faced with ambivalence, disinterest.
- ▶ Don't be flexible with boundaries – remember you should be friendly, but professional
- ▶ Don't forget about the rest of the family – Young people tell us that knowing their family is supported is a weight off their mind.

# Useful Strategies & Prompts

- ▶ When a young person is talkative, you can use open questions rather than closed questions to find out more.
- ▶ When a young person is resistant, it may be more effective to use multiple choice questions, giving them options that they can choose or disagree with.
- ▶ If you aren't sure how to respond immediately, reflect what they've said back to them.
- ▶ Try not to use generic affirmations – Make your feedback personalised to the young person.
- ▶ Let the young person set the agenda, don't force them to talk about something they are reluctant to talk about.
- ▶ Young person is the expert – Don't fall into the “expert trap” by offering opinions without permission.
- ▶ Don't think that you can fix everything

# Example

- ▶ 20 year old female, soft tissue sarcoma left calf, treatment consisting of surgery followed by radiotherapy.
- ▶ complex, pre existing poor mental health, self harm, chaotic family issues, eating disorder, health anxiety
- ▶ Communication breakdown with initial treating team, loss of trust, refusal to attend appointments

# Anna

- ▶ TYA patient extraordinaire .....