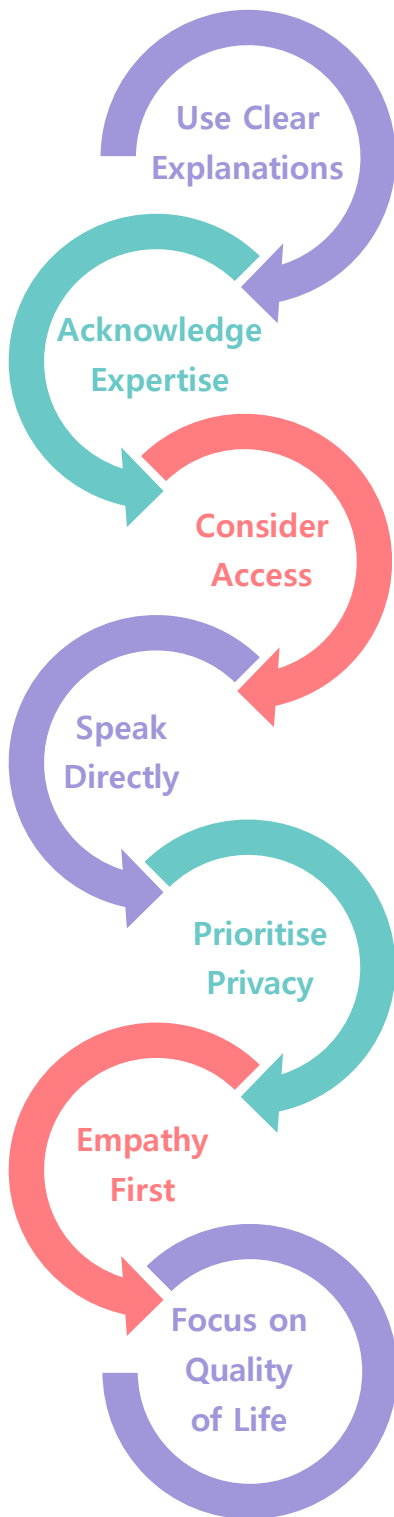


Working together with people with disabilities in healthcare

Across 2018/19, People With Disabilities ACT and Rebus partnered to work with people with disabilities to highlight the challenges often faced in healthcare settings, and the ways healthcare professionals can improve experiences for everyone involved.



- **Avoid using medical terminology wherever possible.** This includes in choices for treatments, names of other healthcare roles and hospital departments. Cognitive overload can be as limiting as poor physical access.
- **Acknowledge that people with disabilities are experts in their own diagnoses, conditions and lives.** Diagnostic overshadowing has a huge impact - be alert to it.
- **Give a copy of all forms, referrals and results directly to the person as a matter of course.** Be aware of power imbalances and access, and meet the person on their terms.
- **Introduce yourself and your role.** Talk with people with disabilities directly, and support them first to make their own decisions about anything to do with their own health.
- **Privacy legislation applies to people with disabilities as much as it does to others.** Consider who you are releasing information to and why. Always ask before touching.
- **Empathy is the first and best intervention - treat the person first.** On-the-ground healthcare involves working with people, not case studies. Remember why most people became a healthcare professional: to work with people.
- **Avoid assumptions about quality of life based on disabilities.** All referrals and treatment should aim to improve the living standards identified by the person with disabilities.