



Enriching young lives

# Virtual Support for Young People



## Tips and Tricks

# Hello and Welcome!

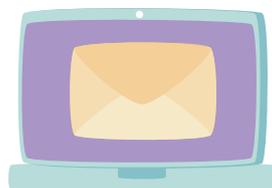
As we know, some young people can find it difficult to talk over the phone, which can make it quite awkward to have a conversation with them. You might end up getting lots of one word, or "yes", "no", and "don't know" answers, so we have put together some tips and tricks to help you to keep your young person engaged over the phone.



REMEMBER...It's important to try not to feel disheartened if your usually chatty young person finds it hard to talk to you on the phone; it's a new skill that they're developing, and you can support them to do this.



Read on for some of our ideas to make your phone calls feel a little easier



# Communication

To avoid getting one word answers to the questions you ask, try to use open ended questions and statements. Here's some examples.

Describe to me...

Tell me about your week...

Can you give me an example...?

Tell me all of your favourite...

Why do you think this is important...?

What happened when...?

Do you have any ideas about...?

Talking about emotions can also be challenging over the phone because you can't see any non-verbal signals that the young person might be showing. To try and gauge how a young person is feeling you could start conversations with things like:

- Tell me about something which made you happy this week
- Tell me about a time when you felt sad this week
- Tell me about something which made you feel angry this week
- Tell me about a time when you felt worried this week

You can also ask them to rate how they are feeling on a scale of 1- 10. This is a good place to start a conversation about how they might be feeling.

# Conversation Starters

Here are some examples of conversation starters you could use to help keep the conversation flowing.

What is your favourite time of the year? Why?



If you could be any animal what would you choose to be? Why?

If you could travel to anywhere in the world where would you go? Why?

If a genie could grant you one wish what would you ask for? Why?

If you could have one superpower what would it be? Why?



# Games



Name Ten - One person chooses a category (for example fruit / colours / films / celebrities) and the other person has to list 10 things in that category, then swap over.

You could also use conversation games to support the conversation with your young person

I went to the supermarket - Going through the alphabet take it in turns to add things to your shopping trolley. The first person will say "I went to the supermarket and bought an Apple". The second person will then say "I went to the supermarket and bought an Apple and Beans". Back to the first person "I went to the supermarket and bought an Apple, Beans and Crayons" And so on all the way up to Z

Yes/No game - Prepare a list of quick-fire questions to ask the young person and they aren't allowed to answer with yes or no!

Two truths and one lie - Take it in turns to say three statements about yourself and the other person should guess which they think are true and which they think is a lie.

20 Questions - One person chooses an object, to hold in their hands The other person has 20 questions to try and figure out what the object is.

# Why not try...?

While face to face meetings aren't taking place, why not try communicating in a different way with your young person? You could try sending them a letter or an email.

Communicating through letters or emails can be a good way for young people to practice their literacy skills. The written communication is also something that they can keep as memories of their relationship with you!

## Some guidelines for written communication:

### Letters:

- You can write to your young person using their address, but they won't be able to write back to you directly as you won't be sharing your address with them
- To get a reply, the young person can write a letter or draw a picture and then this can be photographed and emailed to you by their parents / carers. This is to ensure that your contact details aren't shared with the young person.
- Be mindful of what you are writing in the letter - it would be a good idea to run this past your co-ordinator before you post the letter.



### Emails:

- You can write an email to your young person by sending it to your co-ordinator who can forward this on to the young person directly or to their parents / carers.
- To get a reply, the young person will send an email to their co-ordinator who will then forward this on to you.
- Email addresses of both you and the young person will be removed from this communication as it is passed through your co-ordinator.



# Getting ready for next time

Before the end of your phone call you could set yourselves a task - something you could talk about the next time you speak:

Watch the same film and discuss it next time you chat

Read a chapter out of a book and talk about it

Learn to say a word such as "Hello" in as many different languages as you can

Write a poem and read it to the other person

These are just a few of our suggestions, if you have any that you wish to share, all ideas are welcome! 😊