

During a phone or video call

Remember to be yourself. Focus on engaging with the person and building a good relationship.

Acknowledge the current COVID-19 situation. Give the person time to express how they feel without rushing them. Reassure the person that things are different right now and it's okay if this is having an effect on them. You can share helpful resources, like the [Ministry of Health's](#) mental health and wellbeing resources.

Starting a call

- » Start by introducing yourself and confirm you are speaking to the right person. Check if the person is ready to start the call and encourage them to let you know if they become uncomfortable or need to end the call.
- » Ask about the person's day to help you both settle into the conversation. Describe where you're calling from and have a chat about the expectations you both have for this call. For example, I'm calling from my home and the sun is shining here. How would you like to spend our time today? Do you have something on your mind you want to talk about?
- » Check the sound and/or video quality. Can you clearly see and hear each other? Do you need to make any adjustments?
- » Pay attention to the person's body language, tone and surroundings. Does the person look and sound comfortable and engaged? Are there other people around? Do they need to move to a more comfortable or private space?
- » Speak clearly and listen carefully. Allow time for the person to respond. You may need to speak more slowly, cover one point at a time, ask open questions, or take long pauses.
- » Maintain appropriate eye contact by looking at the camera when you speak and be aware of the person's response on screen.
- » Use your tone, facial expressions and body language to express attention and warmth. For example, smile, nod, and mirror the person's posture.

Finishing a call

- » Ask how the person felt about the call and if they found it helpful.
- » Discuss any follow-up activities and ask about the person's preferences for future calls. For example when will it be helpful to call again? Would they prefer to have shorter or more frequent calls?
- » After the call, document whether the call was by phone or video and if you had any communication or technical problems.

If you have concerns about a person's wellbeing, discuss this with them during the call, if appropriate, and book a time to be in contact again. After the call, discuss your concerns with your supervisor/ line manager for advice on further action.

Be mindful that it may be harder to identify concerns when using phone or video calls. Discuss any uncertainties with your supervisor/line manager. Try to catch up with them regularly to discuss your feelings about using phone or video calls.

Remember to smile – it can be heard in your voice!

Be mindful of the lack of visual cues to help prevent miscommunication.

This [video](#) shows some **easy tips for video calls**.