

✓ **Checklist**

Initial contact and communication

Understanding and awareness

- Understand that trauma and homelessness can impact communication and behaviour.
- Be aware of personal biases - do not make assumptions about customers' situations.
- Recognise power imbalances – acknowledge that customers may feel vulnerable due to their situation or previous negative experiences.

Initial contact

- The first contact will determine how the rest of a conversation will progress.
- Approach customers with dignity and respect. Smile and use neutral, welcoming language.
- Create a welcoming environment and, if possible, offer a quiet, private space for conversations, if appropriate.
- Promote inclusivity and be aware that customers may have visible or non-visible disabilities, language barriers or cultural needs.
- Think about how you would like to be treated and supported if you needed to access a service, and you were having a really difficult day.

Compassionate communication

- Use a calm and gentle tone of voice and use open body language to show engagement and respect.
- Enter a conversation without judgement and avoid judgemental language and reactions.
- Use simple, clear language, avoiding jargon and technical terms.
- Don't be afraid of asking questions about support needs. Ask open ended questions that encourage conversations.
- Ask customers about their preferred methods of communication.

Trust and safety

- Be patient and allow time for people to process information and make decisions.
- Validate customer experiences, demonstrate understanding through active listening and paraphrasing.
- Respect boundaries and if customers do not wish to disclose, do not push or probe too much.
- Offer choices, when possible, to enable a sense of control.

Closing an initial interaction

- Thank customers them for their time and trust.
- Offer reassurance and encouragement if appropriate.
- Discuss any next steps or follow-up information if applicable and ensure that you do what you say you are going to.
- End the conversation on a positive and respectful note.