



Healthier  
**Lancashire &  
South Cumbria**

# **Making Brief Conversations Count**

## **Ask – Assist - Act**

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# Ask – Assist – Act

## How this can help you make short conversations count?

The Ask – Assist - Act is a brief intervention approach that can be used to help and support members of the public with a range of concerns and issues.

This resource is suited to front-line staff and volunteers who have ANY type of contact with the public. It will help you structure a conversation in a way that ensures people have all the information they need to address a concern or issue, and/or direct them to further sources of support. This is about making even short conversations count. This includes public health messaging about issues of health and well being, through the provision of relevant advice, information, guidance and signposting.

This is not intended to be a lengthy chat - if a more detailed or targeted conversation is required, you may find the Person-centered conversation guide more helpful which can be found at: [healthierlsc.co.uk/PersonalisedCareHub](https://healthierlsc.co.uk/PersonalisedCareHub)

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# What does it look like?

## Ask

**This is an opportunity to build rapport.**

If you are instigating the conversation or need to introduce a specific topic, it enables you to seek “permission” to have the conversation.

If you do not need to introduce a specific topic, it allows the person to identify their concerns

## Assist

This is an opportunity to identify what they know about the topic, what they want to do about it, and for you to provide some information on the topic. This is done using **Check, Chunk, Check**

**Check** what the person already knows.

**Chunk** - provide simple clear relevant information

**Check** they understand

## Act

This is an opportunity for you to agree what next steps you and the person are going to take. This includes any referrals or **signposting to sources of further support if necessary.**

[MECC link](#) provides a full range of signposting information for health and wellbeing improvement, including self-care and national and local support services.

# Ask questions

- How's your health being affected by the current situation?
- How are things for you right now?
- How are you managing right now?
- How are you in yourself?
- What's on your mind?
- What's behind that?
- What's at the bottom of that?
- Would you like me to make some suggestions?
- Can we spend some time talking about x now?
- We're asking people about their emotional health today do you mind if I ask you about this?
- Is it ok to talk to you about? (asking permission)
- Is there anything about your health and managing during this time you need more information on or help with?
- How are you managing during self isolation or social distancing, getting your shopping in and maintaining contact with others, is there anything you need support with?

# Assist questions

## **Check – find out what the person already knows**

- I'm just wondering what you know about .....
- You mentioned you are concerned about.....is it ok if we talk about this and how you can keep yourself healthy right now?

## **Chunk – after understanding their current level of knowledge about the topic, support any gaps in knowledge by giving them any additional information about the topic that will help inform them how to address their concern/issue. Provide information in chunks and check understanding before moving on**

- We've got some great information to share with you on.....if you'd like to hear more?
- Would you like me to explain more about .....
- Lots of people are finding ..... helpful

## **Check they understand the information you have given them**

- We've discussed a lot today. Can you tell me what you've found most helpful and how this can help you?
- To check that I've explained everything properly, can you explain to me what you are planning to take forward from our conversation and what you understand I am going to do?
- Just to make sure that my instructions make sense to you, can you tell me what you are going to do next?

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# Teach back – supporting Check Chunk Check

When we speak to people in health and care services there is often a lot of information to be discussed and we may have to explain more than one concept. People can sometimes struggle to take on board information on what they are being asked or supported to do, especially if they are unsure and anxious. Often what people are being asked to take away from an appointment or conversation is left to the end of the conversation, which leaves little room for the person to raise any questions they may have.

By using the chunk and check technique you will be breaking down the information that you need to discuss and that you need the person to understand into smaller more manageable chunks rather than providing it all at once. If in between each chunk, you use a method known as teach back you will be checking for the persons understanding before moving on.

The person may also have questions as things are discussed and if the information is given all together they may leave their own questions to the very end with little opportunity or time left. Chunking and checking will provide opportunities for the conversation and information to be in given at key points.

## Examples questions for using teach back techniques include:

- Would you like me to explain what I think may be helpful.....?
- Can you tell me what from what I have explained is helpful or not and what you can take forward?
- We've discussed a lot today. Can you tell me what you've found most helpful and how this can help you?
- What stands out for you to take forward?
- What advice would you give to others in your situation?
- To check that I've explained everything properly, can you explain to me what you are planning to take forward from our conversation and what you understand I am going to do?
- Just to make sure that my instructions make sense to you, can you tell me what you are going to do next?

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# Act Questions

- What are your next steps and your thoughts?
- Would you be interested in any of these options?
- Would you like me to send this information over to you?
- Shall we call them now?
- What can we do to support you with that?
- What would make a difference?
- Lots of people are finding x service helpful, shall we look at it now?
- Would you like some information on this?
- Would you like me to refer you to .....?
- Would you like me to show you further information online?



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