

PBS Helpline Resources

Good rapport

Building rapport, or connection, has real impact. People often respond more to some carers than others. They may show this by seeking the person out, following them around, smiling, laughing and communicating more when they're with them.

People may be less likely to show difficult behaviours when they are being supported by someone with whom they have a good rapport – they might be more willing to engage and interact. If you think about people in your life, you probably feel more likely to engage with people you have a good connection with.

So it's useful to think about how to build and maintain a good connection – you'll both have a better time and a better connection.

Here are 10 top tips

1. Find out what you have in common (whether it's activities you enjoy or things you like to eat) and spend time doing this together
2. Pay attention to how you communicate so that you're not asking too much of the person or being too bossy
3. Notice and comment when the person says or does things – show you're interested
4. Make sure the person is included in decisions and conversations
5. Listen to the subtle ways they tell you what they want or don't want (even if it's just by turning their head away)
6. Try to understand what those subtle signs mean. Be patient and allow time for the person to get their message across
7. Once you understand what the person means, let them know you get it ("Oh, you want a biscuit!")
8. Be responsive – try to provide what the person's asking for, even if it's in small amounts
9. Build trust. Don't offer things you can't deliver. Be true to your word
10. If you have to give the person bad news, prepare to do this sensitively, clearly and kindly

If you notice changes, like the person being less responsive, have a think about why this might be happening. Think back over these top tips and see if there's anything you can improve on. Reflecting like this can help to keep the rapport.