



Just Include Me Practical Guides Series

Reasonable Adjustments

Supporting equitable care and improved health outcomes for people with intellectual disability.



This guide will help you identify and apply reasonable adjustments to better meet the needs of people with intellectual disability in health care.

? What are reasonable adjustments

Making reasonable adjustments means adapting care around a person to ensure equal access to healthcare, such as using plain language, allowing more time, or creating a quieter environment. It is a core part of person-centred care.



Reasonable adjustments in practice

When a person feels heard, understood and respected, it is easier for them to feel calm and safe in healthcare environments.

Setting the right approach

Introduce yourself clearly.

"Hi, my name is _____. It's nice to meet you. What do you like to do in your free time?"

Always start with the person.

"What can we do to make this easier for you today?"

Assume the person has capacity.

Be friendly and build rapport.

"We want to make this as comfortable and clear as possible for you."

Talk about things the person likes.

Acknowledge feelings and concerns.

"Take your time, there's no rush. Would you like a short break?"

Be supportive and reassuring.

"The doctor will be ready for you in 10 minutes. Do you need a quiet space to sit and wait?"

Accommodate the person's needs.

Use Plain English and explain any jargon.

"I'll explain each step before we do it."

Explain what will happen before you do it.

Use reasonable adjustments throughout care

Before the appointment

- Limit wait times.
- Consider physical adjustments.
- Consider pre-appointment adjustments.
- Suggest support items to bring.

During the appointment

- Allow extra time.
- Reduce noise and distractions.
- Offer breaks if needed.
- Explain procedures step by step.
- Demonstrate equipment before use.
- Use visuals, Easy Read or written instructions.
- Check understanding throughout.



After the appointment

Have you summarised in writing?

Recap and write down the key points for the person to take home. Use Easy Read or simple language.

Are you referring to other services?

Send the referral directly to the service. Include details about the person's adjustment needs in the referral letter.

Have you recorded the person's needs?

Clearly document needs and reasonable adjustments in the person's health records.

Is a follow-up appointment needed?

Make any follow-up appointments on the spot.

Are you working closely with other service providers?

Establish effective working relationships with other local health and disability service providers to improve transfer and coordination of care.

? Check – Is my approach working?

Does the person seem comfortable and engaged?

Have I given enough time?

Do I need to call in someone else?

Are the person's needs being met?

Inclusive practice tips

 **Do ask the person if there are supporters they would like involved in their health care and ask for their consent to contact them.**

A family member, carer or support worker who knows the person well may have helpful insights about the person's needs and reasonable adjustments that support their care.

 **Don't make assumptions about support needs.**

Do ask the person about the support that works best for them during the appointment or health consult. Different environments, unfamiliar procedures, changes in routine, or new staff can affect how comfortable and supported a person feels.

 **Do acknowledge the person first, even if they don't communicate verbally.**

Always acknowledge the person first. Ask the person for permission before involving a support person or family member in the discussion about their care.

 **Don't start a procedure without explaining it first.**

Do show the person the equipment and tools you will be using. Explain how you will be using them and let the person get familiarised with the object. For example, wrap the blood pressure cuff around your arm and demonstrate how they will feel pressure.

 **Do build trust and rapport.**

When a person feels heard, understood and respected, it will be easier for them to feel calm and settled in clinical environments. Take time to connect with the person and chat about things that are important to them.

 **Don't rush decisions.**

Be patient and allow the person time to think about the decision and ask questions. Ask the person how they like to make decisions, and what support has helped them. Break big decisions down into a set of smaller decisions.

☆ Reflect and improve practice

What did you learn that you didn't already know?

- What helped support inclusive care during this interaction?

- What helped the person feel understood, comfortable or included?

- What challenges came up and how did you respond?

- What would you do differently next time?

- Is there anything important that should be recorded or shared to support future care?

☆ Learn more

Scan the QR code below to learn more.



CID's reasonable adjustments checklists for healthcare staff.

 www.cid.org.au/resource/reasonable-adjustments

Council for Intellectual Disability made this guide. CID for short. You need to ask CID if you want to use pictures from this document. You can contact CID at health@cid.org.au

This resource received funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.