

Psychologically informed language – top tips

Think about how to communicate with people who may have differing needs such as learning difficulties, mental health and people who are neuroatypical. People who have experienced chronic trauma and lifelong abuse, need clear language that assures.

These tips may help messaging:

- The first sentence is the most important when inviting people to read on
- Read anything you write through the eyes of your audience
- Imagine what's important to them
- Assume a reading age of 11
- Use pictures as well as words to represent the messaging
- Provide information that is no longer than 1 page, 2 at the most
- Provide no more than 3 key messages
- Provide no more than 5 steps at a time, if you are asking for people to do something different
- Use **assuring** language, whilst **not reassuring** or patronising

Assuring: *is the act of assuring; a declaration tending to inspire full confidence; that which is designed to give confidence*

“You might be feeling worried and confused right now. That's a normal reaction to a situation like this.”

Reassuring: *is the feeling of being reassured, of having confidence restored, of having apprehensions dispelled*

“You are not alone. We're here to help you stay safe and we'll do everything we can to help.”

- Acknowledge feelings by using feelings
- Do not assume people share *your* feelings e.g. “we are all feeling anxious”
- Make sure we can back up promises e.g. “the service will answer your calls”
- Is language clear, calm and helpful for the audience?
- Imagine someone you love, reading it – would they understand it as you want them to?