

In partnership with

**MACMILLAN**  
CANCER SUPPORT



# 7 steps to equal health care

Your guide to getting good health care  
if you have a learning disability



This booklet is about getting good health care if you have cancer and a learning disability.

It uses easy words and pictures to help you understand the information.



You might want someone to help you look at this booklet so you can talk about it if you need to.



Word bank

There is a word bank at the back of this booklet to help you with hard words. Words in **bold and purple** will be in the word bank.

If you think you have not been given good health care, talk to someone you trust.

Tell them what you are worried about.





# What are the 7 steps to equal healthcare?



The **Equality Act 2010** says that doctors' surgeries and hospitals should make **reasonable adjustments** for people who have a disability.

This includes people with a learning disability.



**Reasonable adjustments** are changes that can be made to make sure you get the same care as everybody else.



They could change things like how they make **appointments** and how they plan your care.



The 7 steps to equal healthcare are a set of guidelines.

We think staff should follow them when they care for a person who has a learning disability.



Going to the doctors or the hospital can be scary for anyone.

Sometimes it can be even more scary if you have a learning disability.



It can be less scary if you know what staff can do to help you.



In this booklet we are going to show you 7 things that staff can do to make things easier.



You can take this booklet with you to show your doctor or nurse.

## 1. Imagine being me



Step 1 asks doctors and nurses to think about how they may feel when they go to the doctor or the hospital.



This can help them to think about how you may be feeling.



You may be feeling:

- in pain



- unwell



- scared



- worried





- alone



- confused



- **overwhelmed** – like everything that is happening is too much.



If the staff know how you feel, they will be able to do things better so you don't feel as bad.



## 2. Find out who and what matters to me



Step 2 is about finding out what makes you happy and sad.

It helps staff think about how to make things easier for you at the hospital or doctors.



The more staff know about you, the easier it will be for them to care for you.



There are some main points that will be helpful:

- what helps you stay relaxed



- what makes you feel stressed



- who are the people you are most comfortable with.



You can use our booklet 'Things that are important to me' to tell staff what matters to you.

You can find this on Macmillan Cancer Support's website [see page 23].

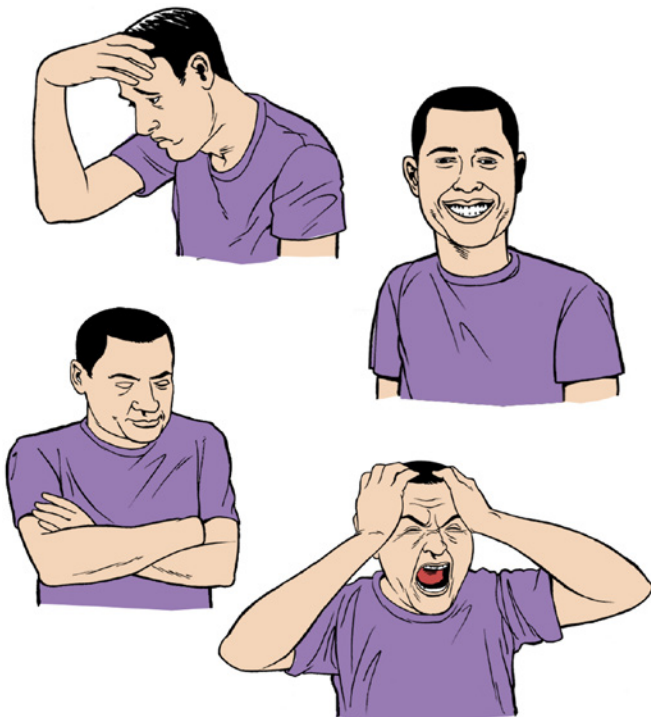
### 3. Listen to me



People **communicate** in different ways. Some people use words and some people do not.



Doctors and nurses know that even if someone does not use words, they can still **communicate**.



If a person does not use words, they may tell the doctor or nurse how they are feeling using their face or body.



Even if a person does use words, they might not always be able to think of the right words.



When people find it hard to **communicate** they can get frustrated.



They might act in a way that hurts themselves or people around them. For example, they might swear or get angry with someone.



Step 3 asks doctors and nurses to find the best way to **communicate** with you. This will make it easier for both of you.





If you find it hard to **communicate**, staff should ask you if you have a **communication passport**.



They should also ask the people who know you what is the best way to **communicate** with you.

## 4. Give me the information I need, in the way that I need it



If you are going to the hospital or to the doctor, they will give you information about what is happening.



Step 4 says that staff should try to tell you what you need to know in a way that you can understand.



If you do not understand what they are saying, ask them to tell you again in a way that may be easier for you.

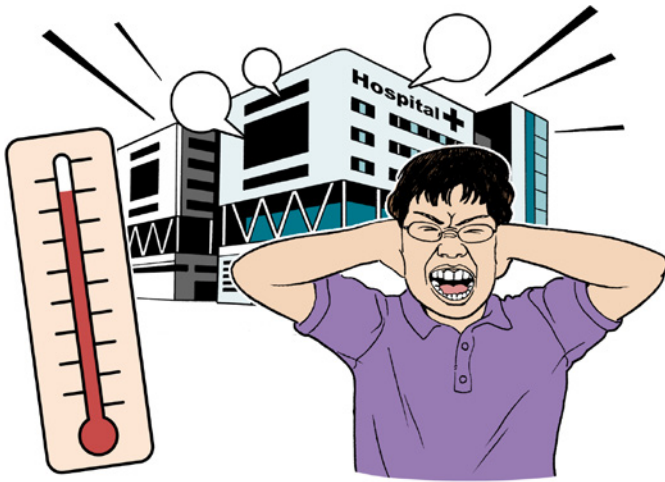


You can also ask a family member or friend to help the staff explain it to you.



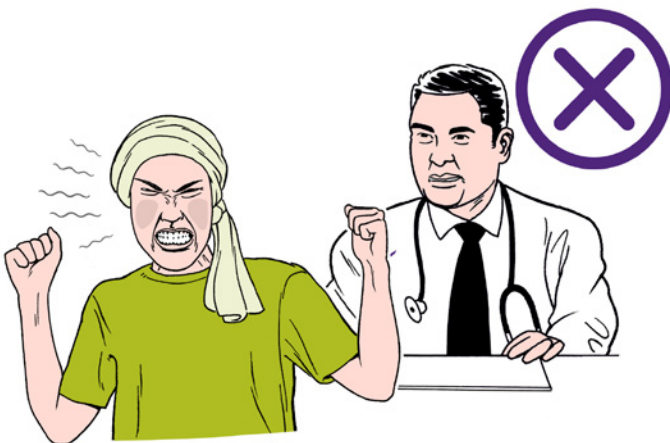
You may be able to get some information in easy read or other formats which are easier for you to understand.

## 5. Think about where we are

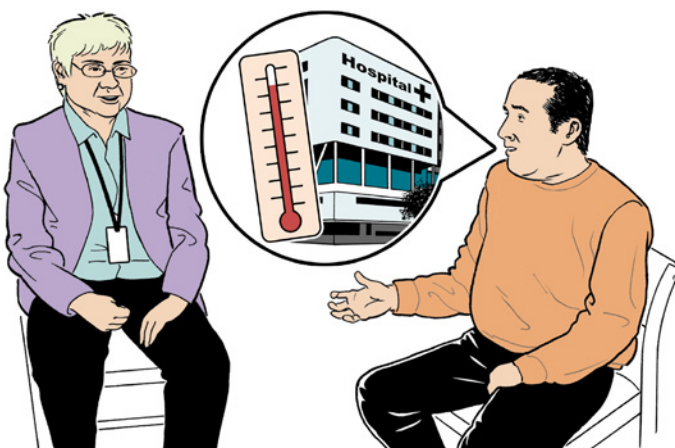


What a place is like can affect how you feel. For example, if it is too hot, too cold, loud or busy, then you might find it hard to stay calm.

Step 5 asks doctors and nurses to think about this.



This could mean that you are too upset or **overwhelmed** to get the treatment or care that you are there for.



If there are things at the hospital or doctors that make you feel bad, tell someone you trust.



The staff can sometimes change how they do things to make things easier for you. These changes are called **reasonable adjustments**.

## 6. Work with others who are in my life



The people in your life can help staff know more about you and the best way to care for you.



You may have lots of different people in your life who could help.





They could be:

- people in your family



- friends



- support workers



- social workers



- a learning disability nurse



- carers



- someone from a religious group



- people you work with.



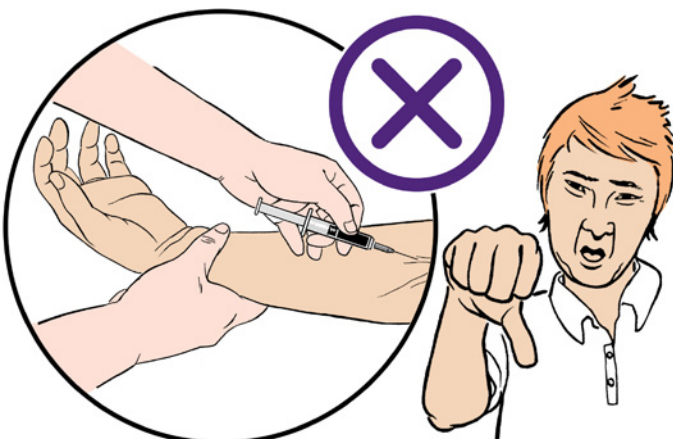
For you to get the best care, step 6 asks staff to speak to some of the people who help you in your life.

This should only happen if you want the staff to talk to these people.

## 7. Giving treatment seems too difficult? Think again.



Sometimes doctors find it harder to give treatment to someone with a learning disability.

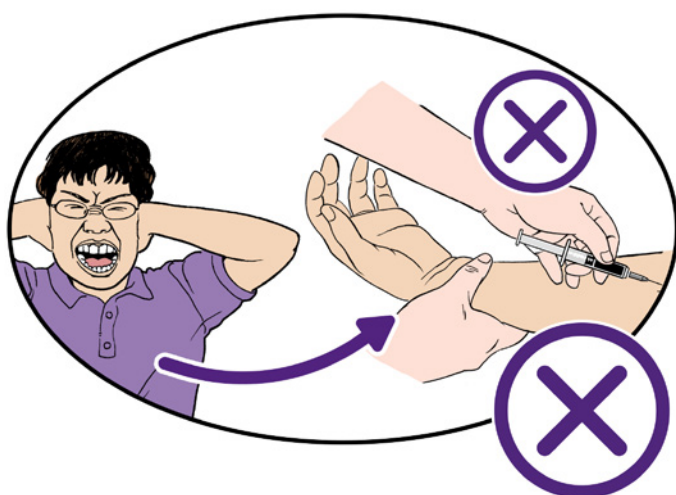


This can mean that people with a learning disability do not always get the treatment they need.



If the doctor is worried about you having the treatment, they should talk to you and the important people in your life.

Step 7 says they should think about ways to make the treatment easier so you can have it.



Sometimes treatment might not be possible. But your treatment should never be stopped because your learning disability makes it more difficult.



If the hospital has a learning disability liaison nurse they may be able to help.

If not, then staff can contact the community learning disability team.



# Word bank



## Appointment

This is a date and time that is set for you to see a doctor or nurse.



## Communicate

When you share your thoughts, feelings or information with another person.



## Communication passport

This is a booklet about the best way to communicate with you. People can read this and learn the best way to communicate with you.

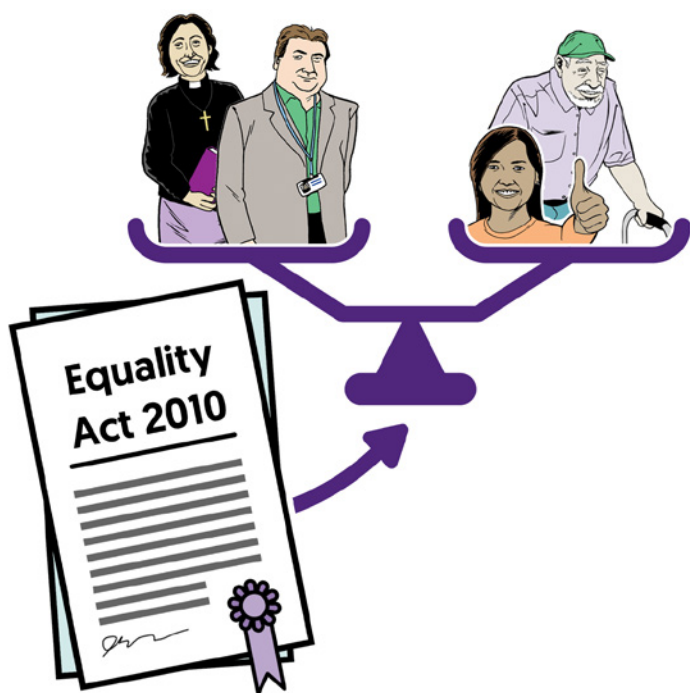
It might also have pictures in it that you can use to tell people what you are thinking.

## Equality Act 2010\*

This is part of the law and it says that everyone should be treated the same in public places and services like hospitals and doctors.

It also says you should be treated fairly at work.

\*In Northern Ireland, they have a different law called the Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
**[[equalityni.org](http://equalityni.org)]**



## Overwhelmed

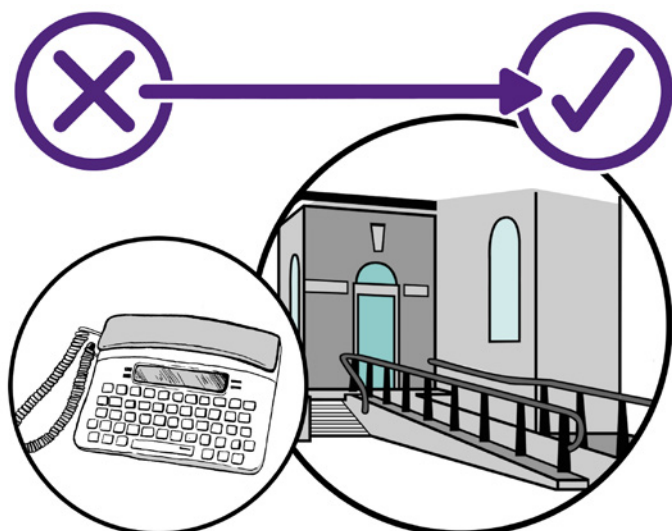
This is when something happens and you have very strong feelings about it. Sometimes it feels like you have too many thoughts or feelings.

These can be good or bad.



## Reasonable adjustments

These are changes made by public places, services and work places to make sure people with a disability are treated the same as everyone else.



# Links

Macmillan Cancer Support has lots of booklets about cancer in easy read.

[macmillan.org.uk/easyread](http://macmillan.org.uk/easyread)



Gov.uk has more information on The Equality Act 2010 in easy read.

[gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-the-equality-act-making-equality-real](http://gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-the-equality-act-making-equality-real)



Enable Scotland has information and support for people with a learning disability.

[enable.org.uk](http://enable.org.uk)



This booklet helps you learn about what good care should look like if you have a learning disability.

It talks about the 7 steps to equal healthcare, which nurses and doctors should follow when they treat you.



If you have more questions about cancer or would like to talk to someone, call the free Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00** Monday to Friday from 9am to 8pm.



If you use a textphone, you can call the Macmillan Support Line using the Next Generation Text (NGT) service by dialling **18001 0808 808 00 00**



Or go to the website [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)

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