

Capacity Guidance: Helping to increase a woman's understanding of cervical screening

Easy to understand information is helpful in supporting communication and understanding. Jo's Trust has materials including an [easy read booklet](#) on cervical screening and online [video](#). The NHS cancer screening programme also produces an [easy read booklet](#).

Also consider:

- Find out how the woman communicates - *you may need to ask carers*.
- Find out which word the woman uses for vagina so that you don't get misunderstandings.
- Offer a pre visit so that the woman can feel safe whilst you explain about the test.
- Consider an alternative venue, if this is appropriate.
- Show the speculum and sample broom to the patient. Let her handle it and explain how they work. For example "You will feel the speculum being inserted."
- Show her the position that she will need to be in when she has the test. Encourage her to get onto the couch to see what this feels like.
- Suggest that she practices the position at home so she feels more comfortable about it. This can be done with her clothes on in her bedroom where she feels relaxed. Carers may need to support this.
- If she wishes to have somebody present during the test, reassure her that it's her choice.
- Offer a longer appointment and/or a first appointment if needed.
- Consider ways to help the woman feel relaxed, e.g. music.
- Consider prescribing your patient something to help her to relax if you think this is necessary.

Remember the woman

- Needs to have an understanding of what will happen at the test.
- Needs to be able to remember this information for as long as it takes to do the test.
- Needs to be able to understand that by having the test it will help her to stay healthy.
- Needs to be able to tell you by any communication means that she would like to try to have the test done.
- Needs to have an understanding of the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer. The easy read document: [Important information about cervical cancer](#), can support this.

REMEMBER you can contact the community learning disability team on 0191 210 6868 for further guidance and support.