KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Clients with cognitive impairment may have difficulty expressing and understanding language. They depend on non-verbal communication (smiles, gentle tone of voice, gestures, and body language that communicates warm and positive interactions) to understand care providers.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) will have an impact on the client’s ability to understand the verbal and non-verbal communication of care providers.
- Care providers are encouraged to consider the following ABC mnemonic when communicating:

  **Attend Mindfully** – Be aware that the PPE will further limit your client’s ability to understand what you are saying and give the client and the communication your full attention.
  **Behave calmly** – Approach from the front, meet your client at their eye level, avoid sudden movements. Project a calm, positive attitude.
  **Communicate clearly** – Speak in short, simple sentences. Keep your tone gentle and your voice even. Speak slowly and clearly. Underline your words with gestures.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CARE STRATEGIES

- Designate specific individuals who have been provided additional training to do swabs with all clients in the facility. [Watch this video on how to do a nasal swab.](#)
- Have a staff person with whom the client is familiar, and enjoys a positive relationship, assist the person who is conducting swabs. If possible, have a third staff person present to assist and ensure safety.
- Attempt swabbing at a time when the client is generally calm and not easily triggered.
- Seat the client upright in a chair in their room (away from noise and distractions). Wrap them snugly with a blanket over their shoulders. The snug sensation will comfort them and prevent any sudden arm movements during the procedure.

**Only the care provider who is familiar with the client should speak to the client during the procedure to avoid creating confusion or overstimulation from too many voices.**

- Tailor the communication based on the client’s comprehension:
  - For clients with preserved comprehension, provide a simple, clear explanation of the procedure (e.g. “We will do a swab of your nose for infection. It will not take very long. I will stay with you.”).
  - In situations where the client’s comprehension is impaired, it may be less stressful for the client if they receive step-by-step instructions, given gently, to guide them through the process. (e.g. “I will help you sit down. Here is a blanket for you. Tilt your head back. Close your eyes...”)
- If using throat swabs, some clients may recognize a tongue depressor and its purpose and open their mouth accordingly. [This video](#) demonstrating mouth opening may help cue the client and can be shown on an iPad or tablet. Provide added sound “Aaahhh!”.
- Once completed, acknowledge that the process may have been uncomfortable and thank the client for participating.
REFERENCES


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