

# Communicating over the Telephone

## Episode 6

### Barriers

Person on the other end of the phone may:

- Not understand the client's speech
- Think it is a sales call and hang up
- Not give time for client to type messages

## When communicating over the telephone

- Don't hang up.
- Be respectful and patient.
- Tell the client if you don't understand.
- The client may:
  - Repeat the message
  - Spell the word
  - Arrange to call back when it's convenient and / or when there is someone who can assist with communication.

## Routine calls

- Negotiate a pre-arranged script with the client.
- Keep the script on file.
- Ask Yes and No type questions based on previous call patterns that have been approved by the client.
- Always provide the option for the client to communicate his/her message beyond Yes and No answers.

## Using an Assistant on the Phone

Ensure that the client:

- Has authorized the assistant.
- Is present on speaker phone.
- If appropriate, refer to a written agreement with password.
- Follow up with an email.

## Alternatives to Telephones

Provide the client with option to use:

- Email
- Fax
- Text messaging
- Online software such as: Skype
- Relay message service
- Face-to-face meeting

# Reflection

- What aspects of your services require your clients to use the telephone?
- Do you have procedures to communicate with people who have communication disabilities?
- Ask your clients if they want to communicate in ways other than using the telephone.