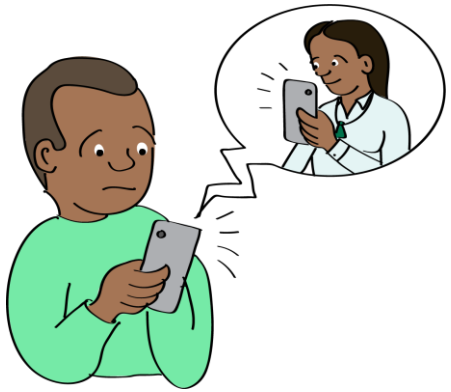
Important phone calls and virtual court appearances

To get rid of the COVID-19 virus, lots of things are different at the moment.

Most of us like to talk and listen face to face but that can't happen in all important meetings while we are all dealing with COVID-19.

Some important meetings and court appearances are happening by phone or by computer.



Talking and listening on the phone or on a computer link can be tricky. For example:

The person who is talking can't always see:

- if other people are distracted or confused
- when listening, understanding information, and thinking gets too much for the listener

The person who is listening might find it more difficult to:

- focus and listen carefully
- hear the conversation clearly
  (the sound can be bad sometimes, and some people have hearing loss that they might not know about)
- understand and remember a lot of talking
- say when they are feeling confused, or need to hear information again, or more slowly
- figure out who is talking if there is a group of people.

Here are some ideas to help everyone get ready for important phone calls and virtual court appearances,

These resources have been prepared by speech-language therapists from www.talkingtroublenz.org contact@talkingtroublenz.org

Getting ready

Technology and things you might need

- Make sure phones or computers are charged.
- Check that the volume is OK. You might need to turn the volume up or wear headphones.
- Get things like glasses or hearing aids ready.
- Get some paper so you can write things down.
- Get any papers ready that you might need to look at.

The place

- Find a quiet place so you can hear the person on the phone or computer.
- Move away from noise – things like TV/radio, and from other people.

Support

- Let the people around you know that you have an important meeting on the phone or computer.
- It might be OK to ask someone to listen with you. You can use the speakerphone on your phone. The other person can write down important information for you and remind you about the questions you want to ask. Think carefully about who is the best person to help you.

Plan

- Find out what is going to be talked about so you can get ready.
- Think about how you feel about those important things and what you want to say.
- Think about the questions you want to ask

  e.g. **"Do I have to do that or do I have some options/choices?"**

  "What happens if I don't do that?"

  "Tell me the consequences of those different options"

If things go wrong:

Remember to say if

- you can't hear properly
- don't know what is happening
- need a break

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International version
4 pager for participants

During the phone or computer meeting

It can be tricky to hear everything being said in a phone meeting, or to see and hear in a computer meeting. Sometimes we don't hear all the information and that makes it hard to:

- understand the discussion
- ask our questions
- say what we need to say.

It's very important to say if there is a problem

"I can't hear you. Speak louder"

"I don't know who is speaking"

"Say that again"

"I don't know what you mean"

"I need a break"

Don't guess!

Guessing is a bad idea in important conversations. When we're confused or things don't make sense there are lots of things we can do …….

Ask questions

Please say that
- Again
- More slowly
- A different way

Things you can say

I'm confused.
What does that mean for me?
What do I have to do?
What is happening next?

I need a break

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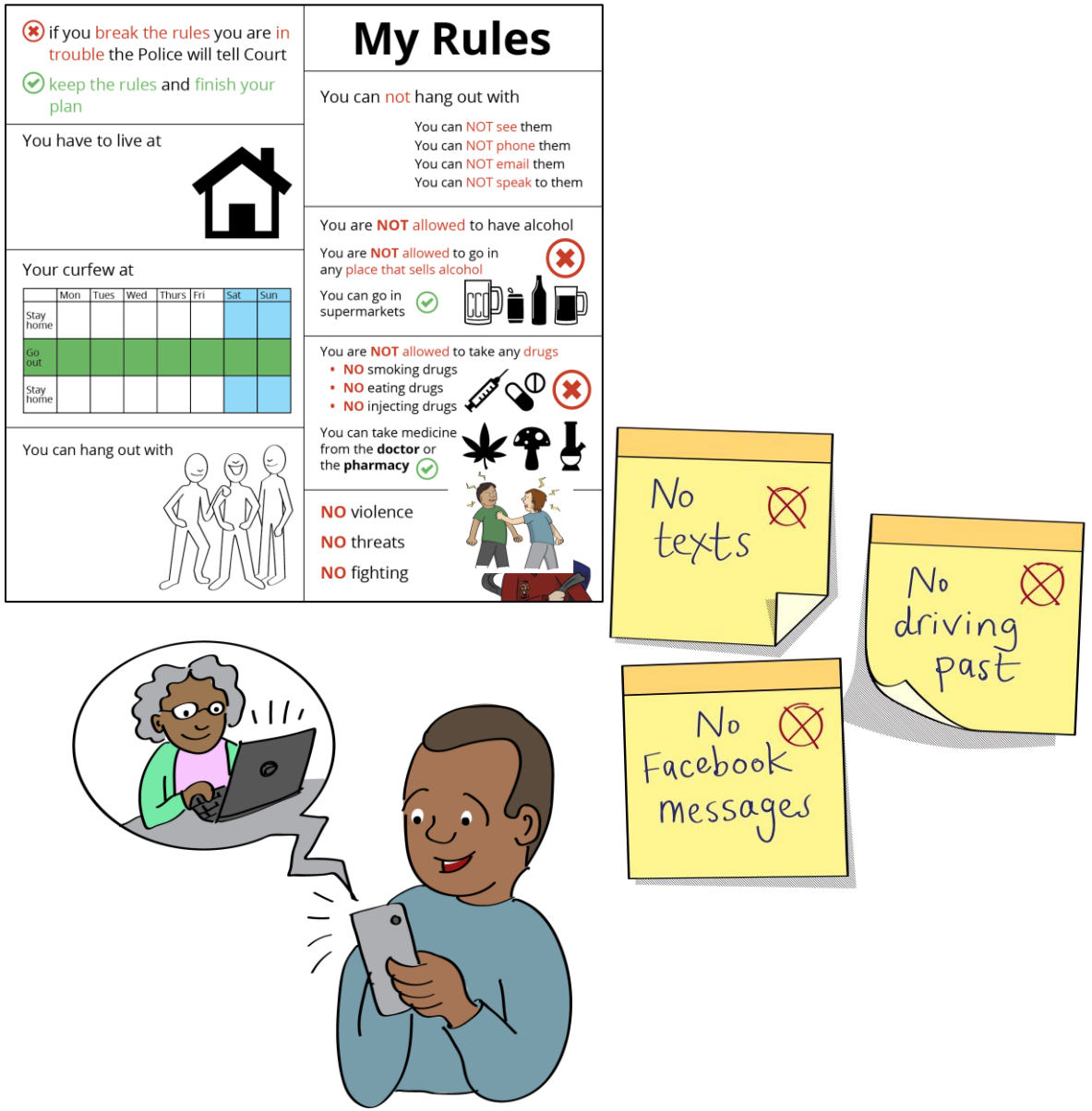
At the end

Think about what happened

You need to make sure that you understood what was said and what it means for you.

You can:

- try to remember as much as you can. Write it down if you can. Audio or video record yourself saying the main things on your phone or computer so you can listen back to it later.
- make sure you know what the next steps are
  - what you have to do
  - what other people are going to do
- ask someone to help you – can someone like your lawyer, a social worker or a trusted friend or family member record the main things on video or audio for you, or write a list of what happened, or what you have to do.
- work out if there is any other information you need. You can think about new questions you want to ask.



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