

Monthly tips and resources featured in **What's Next?** are created for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

## Make the Call: Prep, Practice, Perform

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In the age of digital technology, there are many ways to communicate with others. Often, with text and email options, we can avoid physically speaking to someone for long periods of time.

But this isn't always the case. What if you need to make a doctor's appointment, but need to speak with the nurse first? What if you want to follow up on the resume you sent, because nobody answered your email?

Phone calls remain a part of life. No matter your situation, prepping and practicing before a phone call will help ease your mind.

### Preparing for the phone call

Before your call, identify who you need to speak to and why you are making the call. The answers to these foundational questions will determine everything that follows. It can be very helpful to prepare a list of things you want to accomplish during the call, such as:

- Speaking to the manager.
- Inquiring about the job opening.
- Finding out about the status of your application.
- Scheduling a follow up meeting.
- Thanking them for their time.

With the purpose in mind, consider in advance what questions they may have for you in return. Visualize the call—what questions will the other person possibly ask you?

To show your interest and keep the conversation flowing during the call, think of ways to ask them questions, such as:

- Have you had an opportunity to review my application?
- When will you be scheduling interviews?
- Is there anything else you need from me prior to my interview?

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If your call's purpose is to schedule an appointment, have your calendar open for availability and know a few dates and times that fit your schedule. It's good practice to keep a pen and paper close by to take any notes during the call.

## Practicing for the call

Now that you've prepared for your call, the next step will be using your notes and rehearse how you think the conversation would go. It is a good idea to ask a trusted friend or family member to practice with you. As you practice the call, keep in mind important phone etiquette, such as:

- Speak clearly—try not to use slang or jargon.
- Introduce yourself— “Hello, this is Jabari Mills.”
- State the purpose of your call and who you'd like to speak with— “I'm calling to speak with the nurse about my symptoms.”
- If needed, advocate for yourself— “Please hold. I struggle with hearing and need to turn up the speaker on my phone.”
- Give proper wait time when asking questions— “Do you have any appointments on Thursday afternoons?”
- Listen carefully.
- At the end of the call, thank them for their time— “I appreciate your help today.”
- Close the conversation by saying a departing phrase before hanging up— “Have a great day, goodbye.”

## Performing the phone call

Now that you've prepared and practiced, it's time for the main event. Before you pick up the phone, here's a few more items to keep in mind:

- Remember to breathe, smile, and reassure yourself before making the call.
- Make the call in a quiet space away from distractions.
- Only use the speakerphone if necessary.
- Take notes or have someone nearby who can listen with you and take notes.

We cannot always know how conversations with others will go, but by being prepared with a plan, we can feel at ease knowing that we did our best. Practice is a good thing, and the more calls you make, the easier it will become!

## Resources

- [Make Better Phone Calls](#)
- [Telephone Skills Practice](#)
- [Telephone Etiquette](#)
- [Hearing a Smile](#)

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