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# Understanding Body Language in a Mentoring Relationship

Elizabeth Neathey



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# Objectives of the session

- To understand what we mean by body language
- To explore how to read the body language of your mentee
- To reflect on the impact of your body language on your mentoring relationship



# What is Body Language?

**Body Language is communication without words. It is anything someone does to which someone else assigns meaning.**

Adrian Furnham PhD from Psychology Today, January 2015

**Your body language is the way in which you show your feelings or thoughts to other people by means of the position or movements of your body, rather than with words.**

COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary. Copyright ©  
HarperCollins Publishers



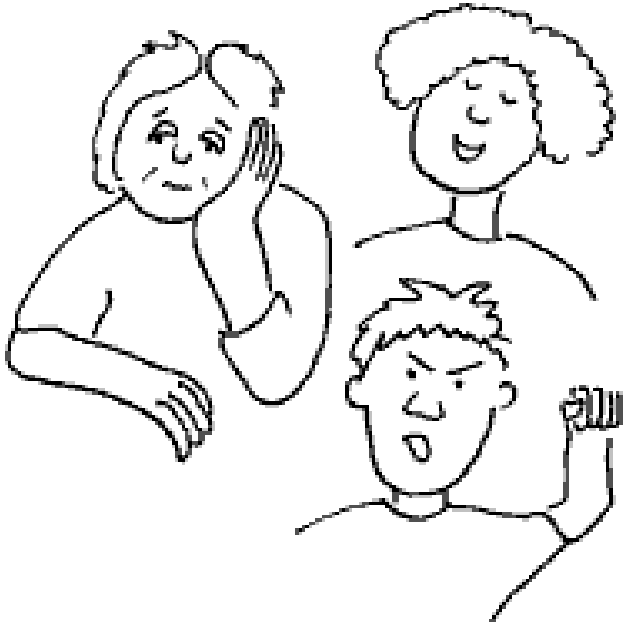
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# What is Body Language?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVeOLIWbnMk>

# What is Body Language?



- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Position of arms
- Position of legs
- General posture

# Facial Expressions



Happiness



Confusion



Sadness



Surprise



Anger



Excitement

# Eye Contact



Highly dilated eyes might indicate desire.



Rapid blinking can be due to distress or discomfort.



# The mouth



People sometimes bite their lips when they are worried, anxious, or stressed.

Tightening lips might be an indicator of distaste, disapproval, or distrust.



# Arms



# Legs



# Posture



**Closed Posture**  
Can indicate hostility,  
unfriendliness, and anxiety



**Open Posture**  
May indicate friendliness,  
openness, and willingness

# The Unconscious Revealed

- **A Bad Hair Day?** From how your hair looks to your clothing reveals how you feel
- **Reinforcing the message:** Your body language will reflect your physical appearance
- **Taking control of your unconscious:** Be aware of these signals to ensure you communicate what you want and not how you feel

**Extenuate the positive**

# Exercise 1

1. Work in groups of three
2. Agree who is the mentee, the mentor and the observer
3. The mentee chooses a feelings card and will interact with the mentor and observer **ONLY USING BODY LANGUAGE CLUES**
4. At any point the mentor and observer can guess how the mentee is feeling





FEEDBACK



# Exercise 2

1. Work in the same threes and retaining the same roles
2. The mentee decides on a mentoring topic
3. The mentor and mentee have a mentoring conversation for 5 minutes
4. The observer records body language of mentor and mentee
5. Spend five minutes where everyone shares their observations and feedback





**FEEDBACK**



# Setting Rapport



# Setting Rapport

Rapport is a state of harmonious understanding with another individual or group that enables greater and easier communication. In other words rapport is getting on well with another person, or group of people, by having things in common, this makes the communication process easier and usually more effective.



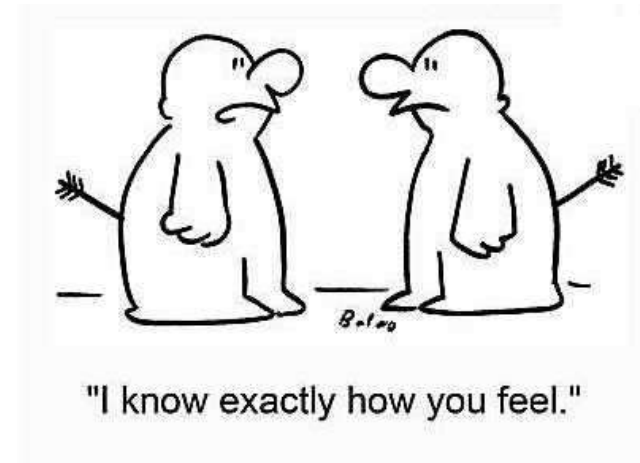
<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/rapport.htm>

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# Mirroring and Matching

Mirroring body language is a non-verbal way to say 'I am like you, I feel the same'. The synchronicity of the crowd at the rock concerts and parades gives a secure feeling of belonging to each and every participant. The research shows that people who experience the same emotions are likely to experience mutual trust, connection and understanding. They will also begin to match facial expressions and body language.

<http://psychologia.co/mirroring-body-language/>



# Exercise 3

1. In threes agree who will be mentor, mentee and observer
2. The mentor and mentee will have a six minute conversation (timed by the observer)
3. The mentor will mirror the body language of the mentee
4. After three minutes the roles will reverse, with the mentee mirroring the mentor



# Feedback

**Observer** – Feedback to on what happened when the mentor mirrored the mentee and then the other way around

**Mentee and Mentor** – What did you notice when your body language was mirrored?

What did you notice when you were mirroring body language?



# In this session we have ...

- Defined body language
- Looked at the different body language signals
- Explored the impact of rapport and mirroring body language in a mentoring relationship



# Questions, observations and reflections





# Online Resources

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/sideways-view/201501/what-is-body-language>
- [https://hbr.org/2017/01/when-giving-critical-feedback-focus-on-your-nonverbal-cues?referral=00203&utm\\_source=newsletter\\_management\\_tip&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=tip\\_date](https://hbr.org/2017/01/when-giving-critical-feedback-focus-on-your-nonverbal-cues?referral=00203&utm_source=newsletter_management_tip&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=tip_date)
- [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Body\\_Language.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Body_Language.htm)
- <http://psychologia.co/mirroring-body-language/>

# Follow up after the session

**If you have any questions from the session please contact:**

Elizabeth Neathey

West of England Museums Development Officer, (Bath and North East Somerset and Swindon)

E: [elizabeth.neathey@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.neathey@bristol.gov.uk)

T: 07887 451 759



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