

# Dealing with Difficult People

Course Leader's Guide  
03-CG01

---

Module 8

Building Rapport

---



Ontario

Copyright © 2002, Province of Ontario  
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
in the Right of the Queen

---

## Module 8: Building Rapport

### **Module Overview**

---

Building rapport is vital in establishing an atmosphere for harmonious communication and trust. This module explores the basics of two-way communication to vault relationships onto a productive and powerful level.

### **Module Purpose**

---

Difficult people may be excellent communicators but may not be in harmony with those who communicate with them at all times. The benefit of being able to establish rapport leads us down a successful path when trying to communicate effectively. Mirroring and matching is a technique that is simple and essential in building a bridge to another's style.

### **Learning Outcomes**

---

Define and describe three different types of rapport that are experienced in everyday settings.

Examine the importance of gaining and losing rapport with colleagues at work and customers in the workplace.

Discover the mirroring and matching technique. Use mirroring and matching as a way to establish a framework from which to gain rapport in everyday settings.

Discuss how body gestures, and non-verbal cues play a part in the communication process.

Determine and explore your sensory style and relate it towards establishing rapport and communicating effectively with difficult people.

## Module 8: Building Rapport

### Module 8 – Building Rapport

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Support Activities</b>
10 minutes	<i>Review of Previous Module</i>	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>OH</i>
25 minutes	<i>Rapport – Ice-breaker</i>	<i>Ice-breaker</i>	<i>Items needed</i>
15 minutes	<i>What is Rapport?</i>	<i>Lecture/Small Group Activity</i>	<i>OH1</i>
10 minutes	<i>Defining cultural, behavioral and personal rapport</i>	<i>Small Group Activity</i>	<i>OH2</i>
10 minutes	<i>Supervisor’s role and rapport</i>	<i>Individual Activity</i>	<i>Article</i>
20 minutes	<i>Matching/Mirroring</i>	<i>Small Group Activity</i>	<i>OH3, Handouts</i>
15 minutes	<i>Coffee Break</i>		
35 minutes	<i>Body language and Culture</i>	<i>Discussion/Video</i>	<i>OH4,, Video</i>
15 minutes	<i>Label the body language</i>	<i>Large Group Activity</i>	<i>OH5</i>
15 minutes	<i>Sensory Language</i>	<i>Small Group Activity</i>	<i>Handouts</i>
5 minutes	<i>Summary of Module</i>	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>OH6</i>

### Required Instructors Materials for this Module

---

Ice-breakers require varied materials and preparation!

Video must be sourced and previewed.

Photocopies of a page for the Large Group Assignment on Mirroring and Matching  
Overhead Projector or Digital Video Projector for PowerPoint Presentation

Flipchart and Markers

White Board and Markers

VCR

### Review of Previous Module

---

*Start this module by reviewing the highlights of the previous module. You may wish to use the first overhead from the previous module as a guide. Ask participants what they felt was*

## Module 8: Building Rapport

*the most useful aspect of the previous module and what they feel they will be able to apply to their work or personal lives.*

*Refer to OH from previous module*

*There are a few Ice-breakers provided that demonstrate rapport building in a real life context. Choose the Ice-breaker(s) that is/are appropriate for the size/ makeup of your group. You will require extra materials for these ice-breakers, please prepare in advance.*

### **Rapport – Ice-breaker**

---

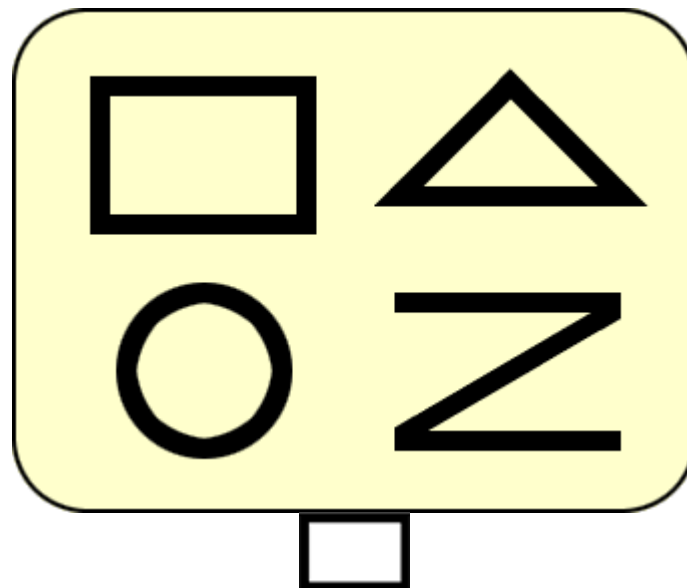
#### **Toilet Paper Tell-All:**

Tell the group that they are going on a camping trip and they need to bring as much paper as they want for one night in the forest. Then for every piece of toilet paper that they bring, tell them they need to tell the group one fact about themselves.

#### **Character Survey:**

Make eye contact with the group - the whole group, and tell them that the following "character survey", is extremely accurate.

First, show the audience the top part of the graphic and explain that the shape they choose reveals what type of character they are. Then uncover the graphic descriptions, shape by shape, and the audience invariably believes this is a "serious" piece of psychoanalysis - until the final shape, the circle, is revealed. You will require a large board with this on it:



**Intelligent  
Strong decision makers**

## Module 8: Building Rapport

Lateral thinkers  
Prepared to look at all sides



Creative  
Strong Imagination  
Leaders



Loves to sleep through meals and gets a thrill from watching people slip on ice.



**All shapes should be large enough for the whole group to read and the revealing of the symbols one by one keeps the interest.** You will require a large board with this on it. The purpose of this ice-breaker is to have some fun and not take things too seriously.

### **Birthday Partner :**

Have participants mingle in the group and identify the person whose birthdate (not year - just month and date) is closest to their own. Find out two things they have in common.

### **Sensuous Sam & Inquiring Ida :**

Ask each participant to choose an adjective that begins with the first letter of their first name and one that really matches their personality. Have them introduce themselves just as they wrote it on the card and allow time for others to ask questions.

### **Dream Vacation:-**

Ask participants to introduce themselves and describe details of the ideal, perfect dream vacation.

### **Pig Personality:**

Ask participants to draw a pig on a blank piece of paper. No peeking at your neighbors pig!

Give no further guidance and do not explain the purpose of the exercise. When participants are finished, share the explanation that the pig serves as a useful test of the personality traits of the artist. If the pig is drawn:

- Toward the top of the paper, you are a positive, optimistic person

## Module 8: Building Rapport

- Toward the middle of the page, you are a realist
- Toward the bottom of the page, you are pessimistic and have a tendency to behave negatively
- Facing left, you believe in tradition, are friendly, and remember dates including birthdays
- Facing forward, (looking toward you) you are direct, enjoy playing devil's advocate, and neither fear nor avoid discussions
- Facing right, you are innovative and active, but don't have a strong sense of family, nor do you remember dates
- With many details, you are analytical and cautious
- With few details, you are emotional and care little for details and are a risk-taker
- With four legs showing, you are secure, stubborn, and stick to your ideals
- With less than four legs showing, you are living through a period of major change
- The size of the pig's ears indicate how good a listener the artist is—large is good.

*You may wish to ask one of your participants to bring in an ice-breaker for the next class and they will lead the group through the ice-breaker!*

## Module 8: Building Rapport

### What is Rapport?

---

So how does one develop rapport? People typically wonder what they have to say in order to establish rapport. The answer is surprising in that the initial steps in establishing rapport require no conversation at all! We all have a natural ability to establish rapport and we are in and out of rapport with people many times during the day. The easiest way of thinking about it is to loosely define the process as....*becoming similar*.

The technique of becoming similar in order to gain rapport is often referred to as matching, mirroring, or pacing. Now there is a clear distinction here between matching and mimicking because in matching the goal is to slowly and unobtrusively approximate the other person's behaviour. You can match nearly any behaviour that you can observe and the elements of powerful matching can include such things as posture, rate of breathing, facial expression, and some gesturing. Also voice tones, volume, pitch, and rate of speech, can be used as powerful rapport builders. Once rapport building comes naturally, it gives us the ability to "plug-in" to someone else's world.

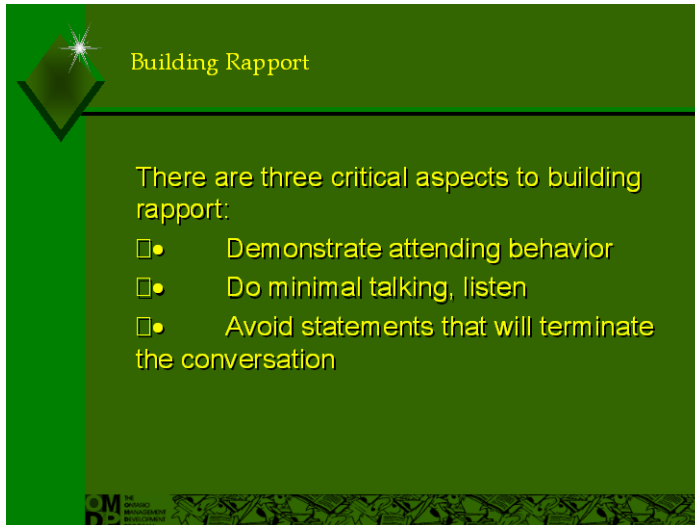
<b>Establishing Rapport</b>	Rapport builds in three stages:
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	<b>Relaxed state</b> - when building rapport with someone you tend to begin to feel at ease or relax and generate a feeling of warmth.
2	<b>Sense of familiarity</b> - either consciously or subconsciously you feel at ease with this person and may assume it must be because you have met them before.
3	<b>Matching physiology</b> - mirroring or matching someone's voice speed, pausing, language, body movements and ultimately breathing is the final stage to truly establishing rapport.

*There are two parts to this activity, you may wish to keep the same groups of two or three to establish their personal rapport. Full group could stay with partners during discussion between the two parts. Participants to flipchart their ideas. Overheads are provided for discussion.*

*Have them list on a flipchart thoughts on the following.*

Refer to OH1:

## Module 8: Building Rapport



Building Rapport

There are three critical aspects to building rapport:

- Demonstrate attending behavior
- Do minimal talking, listen
- Avoid statements that will terminate the conversation

OM  
D

***What is Your definition of rapport?***

***How do you know when two people are in rapport?***

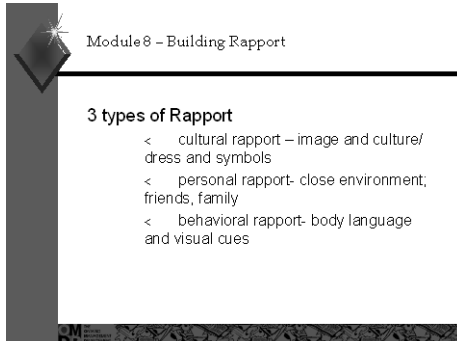
***How do you know when people are not in rapport?***



### **Defining cultural, behavioral and personal rapport**

---

***Refer to OH2:***



Module 8 - Building Rapport

3 types of Rapport

- < cultural rapport - image and culture/ dress and symbols
- < personal rapport- close environment; friends, family
- < behavioral rapport- body language and visual cues

OM  
D

There are 3 main types of rapport

## Module 8: Building Rapport

Cultural rapport – image and cultural taboos are followed in order for familiarity to occur. Demonstrated mainly through dress and symbols.

Personal rapport – Voice tonality and what we say makes the setting a relaxed state. Observed in a close environment.

Behavioral rapport – Body language is in harmony so that rapport can be readily established. Demonstrated through actions.

***The crowd is dressed all in red for a World Cup Football match. What kind of rapport is being demonstrated in this large group? Explain.***

***Can you find a more local example of cultural rapport and an example where personal rapport occurs in your work setting?***

***Two business people meet for lunch. Both are lawyers, one is new to the firm. What type of rapport would you expect to be exhibited?***

***How would you rapidly build rapport? Brainstorm and flipchart 5 reasons/settings why anyone would need to build rapport rapidly?***

*It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice – John Cassis*



### **Supervisor's role and rapport**

---

*The article should take between 5 – 10 minutes to read, questions for discussion below. This is an individual activity. There may be other or more appropriate articles for you group. Always preview your article.*

Building Rapport as a Supervisor

***Please read the article below and comment on the questions provided.***

Developing positive rapport with those whom you supervise is essential in being an effective supervisor. There are specific techniques and skills that enable supervisors to build rapport.

To be an effective supervisor you have to be genuinely interested in people. This interest can't be faked. However, for some supervisors it is difficult to

## Module 8: Building Rapport

show this interest because they don't know how to build rapport. Building rapport with the people you supervise demonstrates clearly that you are interested in them and care about what they are doing.

There are three critical aspects to building rapport:

- Demonstrate attending behavior
- Do minimal talking, listen
- Avoid statements that will terminate the conversation

As a supervisor demonstrate attending behaviour by practicing the following:

- Schedule meetings in advance.
- Provide opportunity for those participating in the meeting to help build the agenda.
- Provide an agenda of the topics to cover.
- Be certain to include enough time to cover all agenda items thoroughly. If this is not possible, prioritize items and save the lower priorities for another time.
- Be certain there are no interruptions during the meeting.
- Make eye contact with the others at the meeting.
- Position your body to openly face the person speaking.

Avoid doing other things like looking away, writing, or whispering to someone else while someone is speaking.

Once you demonstrate that you are genuinely interested by giving the person your undivided attention, you can increase the rapport by asking open-ended questions that encourage others to do the talking. When it is necessary to present information, do it concisely and directly. Don't couch the needed information in a long explanation hoping the person will glean what they need. Get directly to the point and allow the other person the opportunity to ask for clarification.

Once the atmosphere of openness has been created it is essential that it be continued and not cut short. Do not give the impression that you are hurried or that the other person is being hurried out of the office. Making statements like, "It sure has been good talking to you about this problem," may be recognized to mean it's time to quit.

When it is time to complete the meeting or conversation, do it directly by summarizing what has been agreed upon and stating that the business is complete. Until it is time to finalize the meeting don't bring it to close with conversation terminators.

Supervisors who practice attending behaviours, refrain from monopolizing the conversation, and maintain an open exchange of information will find their role as a supervisor more pleasant and, perhaps, more rewarding. They will find their staff to be more candid and willing to share information.

## Module 8: Building Rapport

Material adapted by Don Broshar, ISUE Staff Organization Specialist, from *The First-Time Manager* by Loren Belker and the *Supervisor's Survival Kit* by Elwood Chapman

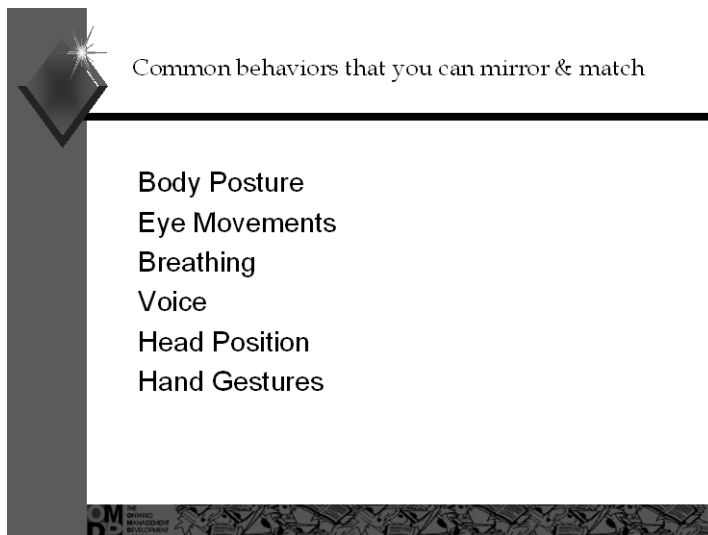
*Here is questions that should be discussed. You may wish to add to these questions.*

**Are there any differences from the perspective of supervisor/ co-worker/ customer?  
Why is it important for supervisor's to build rapport with their staff?**

### **Mirroring and Matching**

*This is an exercise to demonstrate mirroring. Please read the instructions in detail.*

Refer to OH3:



*This may be withheld until after the mirroring exercise below*

Learning to mirror and match purposely in order to establish rapport enables us to enhance our communication with others. You can become aware of the different body language cues, rhythms, gestures, breathing patterns that you and others have. In the beginning it may feel awkward. But the value in learning to achieve and maintain rapport is worth the time and effort it takes to become skilled in this area of communication.

Mirroring occurs naturally as a part of rapport building, but it can be learned and enhanced. It is a rapport technique by which you observe another's behaviour and then in a subtle manner act the same way they are acting. For example, when the person you are talking to leans forward, relax a little and then begin to lean forward, too. This behaviour will have a positive effect. At an unconscious level the person will feel acknowledged and appreciated.

## Module 8: Building Rapport

Matching also involves learning to reproduce the behaviours of another in a subtle way. One difference between mirroring and matching is timing. While mirroring is simultaneous with the other person's behaviour, matching can be delayed. If someone is gesturing in a certain way while talking, you can be still and listening attentively. When it is your turn to speak, you can make your comments using similar gestures.

Like other skills, mirroring and matching can be learned and mastered by practicing. When you are talking to someone, find one aspect of the other person's behaviour to focus on and mirror or match--perhaps the body posture. Gradually add other aspects until you can make it natural. You should be creative and use small variations in your routine.

Mirroring or matching does not mean that you do exactly the same thing as another person is doing. Instead, you may wish to do something else. For example, when the other person crosses his or her arms, you may cross your legs or tilt your shoulders slightly.

*You should preview this exercise, as you will need to split the group into two separate groups. Odd number of students could be observer of a dyad.*

*You may ask the participants to take 10 minutes to spend sometime with someone who they have not spent much time with in this course.*

*The students are not getting these instructions below.*

- 1. Assign partners. Have A list not tell the person initially that you will be mirroring him or her during the conversation. The A group should think of topics that they would like to discuss. If the group is short, the facilitator should partner with the odd person.*
- 2. Make sure that only "A" members understand and have been given a copy of the briefing sheet. "B" members are told only that they should make themselves comfortable.*
- 3. Have A list not tell the person initially that you will be mirroring him or her during the conversation. The A group should think of topics that they would like to discuss. If the group is short, the facilitator should partner with the odd person.*
- 4. Make sure that only "A" members understand and have been given a copy of the briefing sheet. "B" members are told only that they should make themselves comfortable.*

*"A" members should take a few minutes to read this carefully first.*

*"A" members should get a comfortable location to sit with their "B" partner and do the following:*

***Instructors should make copies of the briefing sheet it is not in the student notes.***

## Module 8: Building Rapport

### Briefing Sheet for “A” Members:

Enter into a conversation with the person, asking for his or her opinions about various subjects.

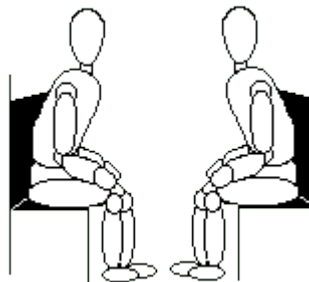
As you are conversing, begin to subtly mirror the other person's physiology (including voice tone and tempo). [Hint: This can be most easily done in the context of 'active listening'; that is, reflecting back statements the person has made, by commenting, "So what you are saying is....", and then stating your understanding of the person's opinion.]

When you are fully mirroring, you will be sitting in the same posture, using the same types of gestures, speaking at a similar speed and volume, and in a similar voice tone range, as the other person. If you are completely mirroring the other person, you will even be breathing at the same rate and in the same part of the chest cavity as the other. Notice what it feels like when you have reached this level of rapport.

One way to test your degree of rapport is by "second guessing" the other person's opinion on a couple of subjects that you have not yet discussed. Often mirroring will give you access to information that is being unconsciously communicated and received, and you will "pick up" information about the other person without being consciously aware of how you got it. This is why mirroring is such a powerful tool for modeling.

To get another sense of the influence of mirroring on your interaction, you can try out what it is like to abruptly mismatch the other person in posture, gestures, voice tone and breathing. Both you and your partner should experience quite a jolt if you do this, and feel as if your quality of rapport has changed dramatically.

Before concluding your conversation and letting your partner in on what you were doing, make sure you have reestablished rapport by once again physically mirroring your partner.



## Module 8: Building Rapport

### Body Language and Culture

---

*Instructor should locate a short video that is appropriate for the topic. Always preview your video. The question below is for discussion. Video suggestions can be found at your learning resource center or their online search engine. Always preview videos before showing.*

What are some cross-cultural differences that are seen with body language?

### Examples of Common Behaviours

The following are some examples of common behaviours you can mirror and match:

- Body posture** Observe the person's body posture. If the person is leaning, notice how their posture is aligned. You may start assuming the same posture and direction.
- Eye movements** Look carefully at the person's eye movements. If the person tries to make eye contact, you may wish to keep eye contact. Or if the person is blinking rapidly, you may match by discreetly tapping your finger at the same rate as they are blinking.
- Breathing** Mirror the person's breathing patterns; breathe faster or slower to match their breathing. This is very important because breathing is directly linked to our emotional and mental states.
- Voice** Be aware of their volume, rhythm, accents, timbre, and tone. You can pace the rhythm of someone's speaking with slight nods of your head or your breathing. Be aware that people feel more comfortable with someone who speaks the way they do. So, if they are speaking fast, you should speak fast, too.
- Head position** Look at things like the angle of their head and try to angle your head in the same way.
- Hand gestures** Observe the person's hand and arm movements. If the person is making obvious gestures, you may choose to make similar movements. If they are crossing their arms, you may cross yours, too; or you can start rubbing your hands together.
- Leg activity** See how their legs are crossed if they are sitting. Usually, you may choose to cross your legs, too.

### Body Language Cues

## Module 8: Building Rapport

Body language provides important information beyond the words you hear. People in all cultures understand some nonverbal expressions; other expressions are particular to certain cultures. The most obvious body language is when someone shakes their head either back and forth or up and down. This is a commonly recognized gesture, which means no, or yes. Other signs of body language include bodily movements. Sadness, for example, is usually expressed when a person gazes down, in a slumped or flexed-forward posture of the shoulders. Happiness, on the other hand, is usually expressed when a person laughs or smiles, and sometimes cries because of intense joy. There are many common signs of body language that are related to specific types of behaviour. The following are typical examples of body language cues:

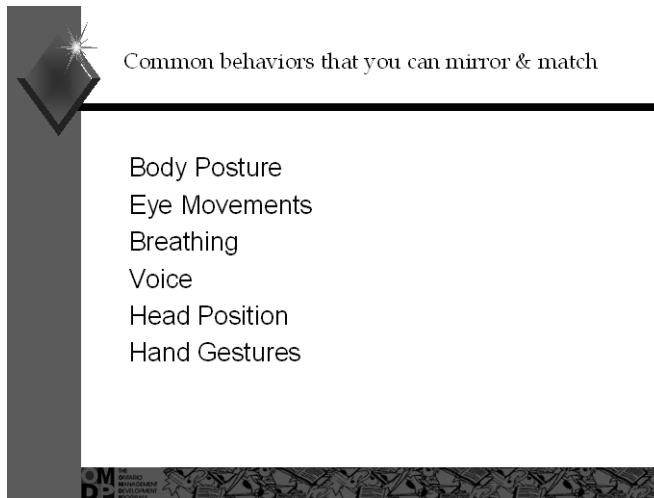
<b>Anxiety</b>	legs crossed and one of them is bouncing
<b>Impatience</b>	drumming fingers, or touching nose/face
<b>Defensiveness</b>	frowning, rubbing back of neck, or arms crossed in front of chest
<b>Doubt</b>	rubbing eyes
<b>Aggressiveness</b>	pointing with fingers, darting eyes, gestures with fist, or hands on hips
<b>Insecurity</b>	biting fingernails, clearing throat, playing with hair, or looking down when speaking
<b>Nervousness</b>	whistling, jiggling pocket contents, biting on pens or other objects, running tongue along front of teeth, or running fingers through hair
<b>Openness</b>	Open-lipped smiling, leaning forward, or hands placed behind the head leaving elbows open and armpits exposed
<b>Confidence</b>	putting tips of fingers of one hand against the tips of fingers of other hand, or hands joined behind back when standing

***Which cues have more than one meaning?  
Why is body language is commonly misinterpreted?***



## Module 8: Building Rapport

Refer to OH4:



Good body language involves keeping good personal space, making eye contact, sitting or standing up straight, and looking interested. Bad body language involves the opposite. Staring at the floor, turning body side-ways, scowling, pointing finger, rolling eyes, crossing arms, fidgeting, rocking back and forth, slouching are some common signs of bad body language.

There are four major areas of body language that should be observed carefully:

### **Eye contact**

Look at the person during spoken communication; do not move attention to other things. Smiling eyes are comfortable! Otherwise, limited or no eye contact means that the person may be lying, uninterested, too confined, uncomfortable, or distracted.

One reason for losing someone's eye contact is when you step into someone's personal space; their natural sign is to look away. So, keep personal space - 2 or 3 feet is a comfortable distance for most people.

### **Posture**

Sitting up straight or even leaning toward the speaker shows that you are interested in listening to him or her. Shoulders hunched forward means lacking interest while a too rigid body posture means being anxious.

### **Gestures**

One of the most important parts of facial gestures is the mouth: upward turns in the corner of the mouth are often positive signs and downward turns or flat lines in the mouth express negative behaviour.

Another import cue is monitoring arm and torso movements. Crossed arms can be just signs of cold or signs of closed-off posture, boredom, lack of interest, or other negative behaviour.

### **Tone of voice**

One simple rule to remember is: "It's not so much what you say, as the manner in which you say it; it's not so much the language you use, as the tone in which you convey it"

## Module 8: Building Rapport

You should give the participants time to label the diagrams with the following terms below. Responsive, combative, reflective or figurative. Some of them may cross over to a different mode. This is for discussion (note: the student guide has the drawings mixed)

Answers are :

**Responsive positions are all in column A**

---- **Combative for B**

---- **Reflective for C**

----- **Figurative for D**

### Label the Body Language

---

**Label the mode of body language in the diagrams with the correct terms below. Four basic modes of body language in business are presented, and the terms can be used more than once Can you reach consensus among the large group.**

---

*column is all A down*

*B*

*C*

*D*

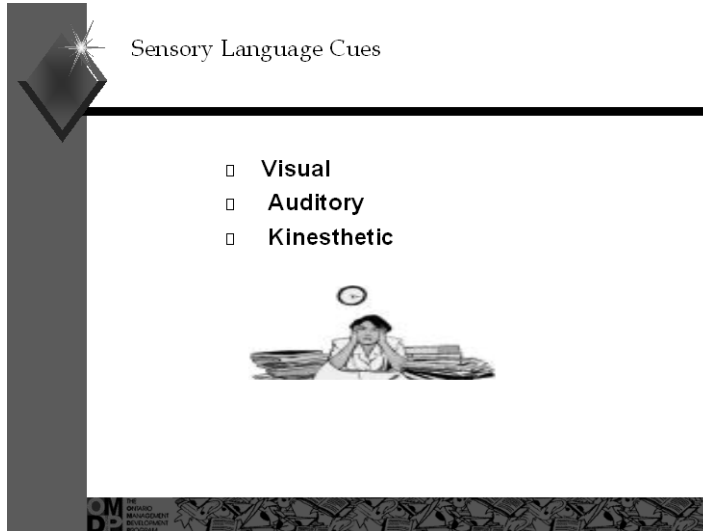
Students' pictures are mixed up.



## Sensory Language

---

Refer to OH5:

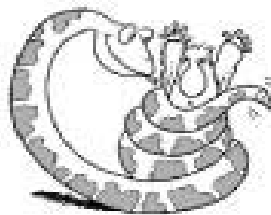


A slide titled "Sensory Language Cues" with a list of three items: Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic. Below the list is a cartoon illustration of a person sitting at a desk with their head in their hands, looking stressed. A speech bubble above them contains a question mark. The slide has a dark grey background with a white border on the left and bottom.

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinesthetic

Determine what is your basic type of sensory language style. Are you a **Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic** person? We all are a little of all three styles. One way to help determine your preferred sensory language style is to determine what saying suits you best.

**Kinesthetic** people may say...



“I grasp what you are saying”

“show me how to do this”  
“that doesn’t feel right”  
“you have a heavy task”

**Visual** people might say...

“I get the picture”  
“I see what you mean”  
“My perception is”

**Auditory** people use such phrases as....

“That sounds good to me”  
“I hear you loud and clear”  
“Let me explain how this works”

## Module 8: Building Rapport

To create rapport with people you deal with, listen to find out their primary sensory language style, and then mirror their style.

Determine your primary style – determine the style of people you deal with – what changes can you make to communicate on the wavelength of your difficult people?

*Have the group determine their sensory style and split into groups to work on the question below with their sensory style partners.*

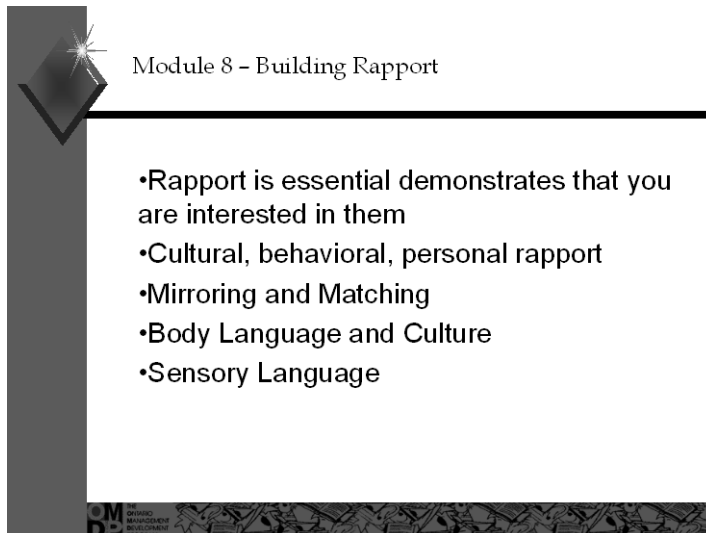
**What is your primary style?**

**How would you communicate with a customer with the same sensory style and with a different sensory style?**

### Summary of Module

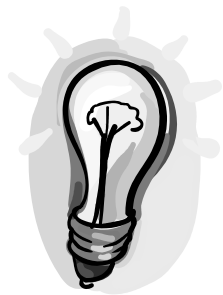
---

Refer to OH6:



Module 8 - Building Rapport

- Rapport is essential demonstrates that you are interested in them
- Cultural, behavioral, personal rapport
- Mirroring and Matching
- Body Language and Culture
- Sensory Language



## Check Your Understanding

## Module 8: Building Rapport

Check your understanding of the material covered in this module by working through the following questions.

### What is Rapport?

---

Which point below is not consistent with attempting to establish good rapport?

- Find common language and listen attentively:
- Encourage the person to talk
- Be open-minded and honest
- Pretend that you are knowledgeable in all areas
- Project positive feelings

Which carries the most communication message when meeting someone for the first time

- Facial expression
- Vocal expression
- Words

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal \_\_\_\_\_ rapport occurs when a dad speaks calmly to his daughter when they have something sensitive to talk about.

Silence can be used appropriately is an important part of establishing rapport. T or F

Voice \_\_\_\_\_ tonality \_\_\_\_\_ describes how we sound when we talk. It is our pitch.