Trainer Skills Course for Anti-Trafficking Trainers
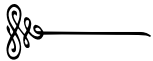
Lesson 5

Communication, Listening and Questioning Skills
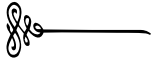
Trainer Notes

1

Lesson 5: Communication. Listening and Questioning Skills
*Last Revision: 5th June 2005*

Duration of Instruction

The lesson will be student centred and student lead.

Prior to the Lesson

Set up the classroom. Ensure there are sufficient registration forms, participant lesson notes, notebooks, pens and pencils for each participant. Ensure that the classroom walls are clear of documents. Ensure that all course planing is completed.
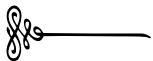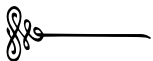
Material, Equipment, and Logistics

White board, flip chart paper, markers, LCD Projector, Participant notes
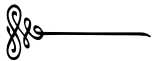
References

1. Morris D Manwatching (1977)
2. Mehrabian A Silent Message (1971)
3. Patterson Miles L. In Nonverbal behaviour: A Functional Perspective

Lesson Goal

The goal of this lesson is to provide participants with an understanding of the principles of Communication.
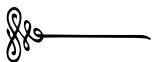
Performance Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Identify and apply all aspects of the Communication Model
2. Describe the important elements in active listening skills.
3. State the different types of questions and their usage
4. Identify effective techniques of asking questions
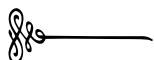
Introduction

People have been communicating in one form or another all of their lives. Unfortunately in this communication not everyone is understood all of the time. It is crucial for the trainer that he/she effectively communicates with all participants in his/her group, and that all of the participants understand what is being communicated to them.

☞ *Performance Objective 1: Identify and apply all aspects of the Communication Model.*

I. Verbal Communication

A. Words

The use of words is, of course, one of the ways in which people communicate, and words often communicate what the sender wishes to say, but this is not always the case. There are three aspects to words:

CONTENTS   **MEANING**   **FEELINGS**

Words are used by people to convey meaning. <u>Example</u>: if someone says "I saw two cars collide" the meaning is fairly clear.

Words, which do not match the meaning, intended. There are circumstances when people communicate words which are in conflict with what they really mean or feel. "I am fine" or I'm dying" are two common examples of phrases used which a person might not take at face value.

Words, which have a different meaning for the receiver than for the sender. This is often associated with dialect or cultural habits. These can be vastly different between the north and south of a country (also the east and west), and can easily lead to confusion and misinterpretation.

For an effective communication to take place, the receiver must always check that the signal being received is the same one, which is being sent.

II. Non-Verbal Communication

The study of non-verbal communication has attracted a large number of theories to explain what it is, why we as human beings use it and what it all means. It is important to note, as Desmond Morris[1] does in his book *Manwatching* (1977), that humans distinguish themselves from most animals by thinking and building in addition to acting. This idea relates specifically to nonverbal communication, because as we will see, kinetic gestures are often "built," not instinctively known. In addition, kinetic actions may be less useful as singular actions than as groups

Experts on nonverbal communication agree that "body language" movements are partly instinctive, partly taught and partly imitative (Zunin, 1972). Unlike verbal interaction, however, most kinetic gestures are rarely explicitly taught, but instead learned through an implicit process [2].

Ways to Improve Nonverbal Communication

It is not only what the trainer says in the classroom that is important, but also how he/she says it. This can make difference to the participants. Nonverbal messages are an essential component of communication in the training process. Trainers should be aware of non-verbal behaviour in the classroom for three major reasons:

- An awareness of nonverbal behaviour will allow the trainer to become a better receiver of participants' messages,
- The trainer will become a better sender of signals that reinforce learning.
- This mode of communication increases the degree of the perceived psychological closeness between the trainer and participants.

Some other major areas of non-verbal behaviours to explore are:

1. Eye Contact

Eye contact is an important channel of interpersonal communication that helps top regulate the flow of communication. It can signal interest in others and eye contact with audiences increases the speakers' credibility. Trainers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth and credibility. However the comment made earlier regarding cultural differences with eye contact should be kept in mind at all times.

2. Facial Expressions

Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits:

- Happiness
- Friendliness
- Warmth
- Liking
- Affiliation

Therefore if the trainer smiles frequently he/she will be perceived as more likeable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and participants will react favourably and learn more.

3. Paralinguistic

Some aspects of this facet of non-verbal communication have already been mentioned, such as intonation. A full list of vocal elements would include:

- Tone
- Pitch
- Rhythm
- Timbre
- Loudness
- Inflection

For maximum training effectiveness, the trainer should learn to vary these six elements in his/her voice. One of the major criticisms is of trainers who speak monotonously. Listeners perceive these trainers as being boring and dull. Participants report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to trainers who have not learned to modulate their voices.

4. Humour

Humour has already been mentioned as part of the lesson on Group Dynamics. Great care must be taken when using humour in the classroom, and it is very often discouraged. However it does not change the fact that humour is often overlooked as a training tool. Laughter releases stress and tension for both the trainer and participants. The trainer should develop the ability to laugh at himself/herself and encourage participants to do the same. It can foster a friendly classroom environment that facilitates learning. Whenever a team has been successful, there has usually been the presence of humour within the team.

Obviously adequate knowledge of the subject matter is crucial to the success of the trainer; however it is not the only crucial element. To create a climate that facilitates learning and retention of the learned material the trainer has to posses good non-verbal and verbal skills. To improve his/her non-verbal skills, the trainer should try to record himself/herself speaking on videotape and ask a colleague to suggest refinements.

Group Activity:

The trainer should have the participants stand in two lines, the lines being well spaced apart. To show the importance of listening skills, play a game of Chinese Whispers, where the same message is given simultaneously to the first person in each line. This message is then verbally repeated down the line by one person whispering it to the next one. No questions are allowed and the person must pass on what he/she hears. The last person in the line will then say aloud what the received message was. When both lines have reported their message, the original message is then given to the class. This will show the deficiency in how we listen to what is being said.

III. The Communication Model

Communication is the sending and receiving of signals.

A. Transactions

Communications is really a process band, and this is sometimes referred to as a transaction. Most transactions last only for a short time, so it is important that this time is used to make the transaction meaningful. A trainer therefore needs to look at what makes up a transaction and how to help one run smoothly.

B. Frame of Reference

Trainers while communicating, place what is known as "frame of reference" around the situation that faces them. This frame of reference or "way to the world" is influenced by many factors.

If the participant was asked to think back of the time before he/she commenced his/her current profession and to think of the things that influenced the way in which he/she saw the world in that period of his/her life, he/she may list some of the following:
- General knowledge
- Education
- Religion
- Family and Upbringing
- Exposure to the media
- Experience in life
- Personal goals and ambitions
- Current physical and mental state
- Peer pressure

If the participant were to think of the frame of reference that influences him/her now, he/she may include:

- Professional Knowledge
- Law and Procedure
- Police Policy
- Colleagues Views
- Local Knowledge of the area in which they work

When the trainer is communicating with his/her participants using the frame of reference, it is most likely that the participants will sub-consciously be influenced by their most recent experiences and the factors that mostly influence them at present.

C. Simple Communication Process

A simple communication model, or process, is consisted of a **Sender** (Trainer) and a **Receiver** (Participant). Unfortunately there is much interference to what may be said by the Trainer as to what was actually heard by the Participant.

The Communication Model


```
              Sender                                          Receiver

  Thoughts → Choose    → To        → Sending     → Reflection → Thoughts
             way of       formulate    the
             commun       the          information
             ication      message      by the
                                        chosen
                                        way of
                                        commun
                                        ication
  ↑ Intention                                                           ↓ Reaction

                                        Filters

                                    Feedback
```

> If there is feedback from the receiver back to the
> sender it is a 2 way communication, and when there
> is no feedback it is one way- communication.
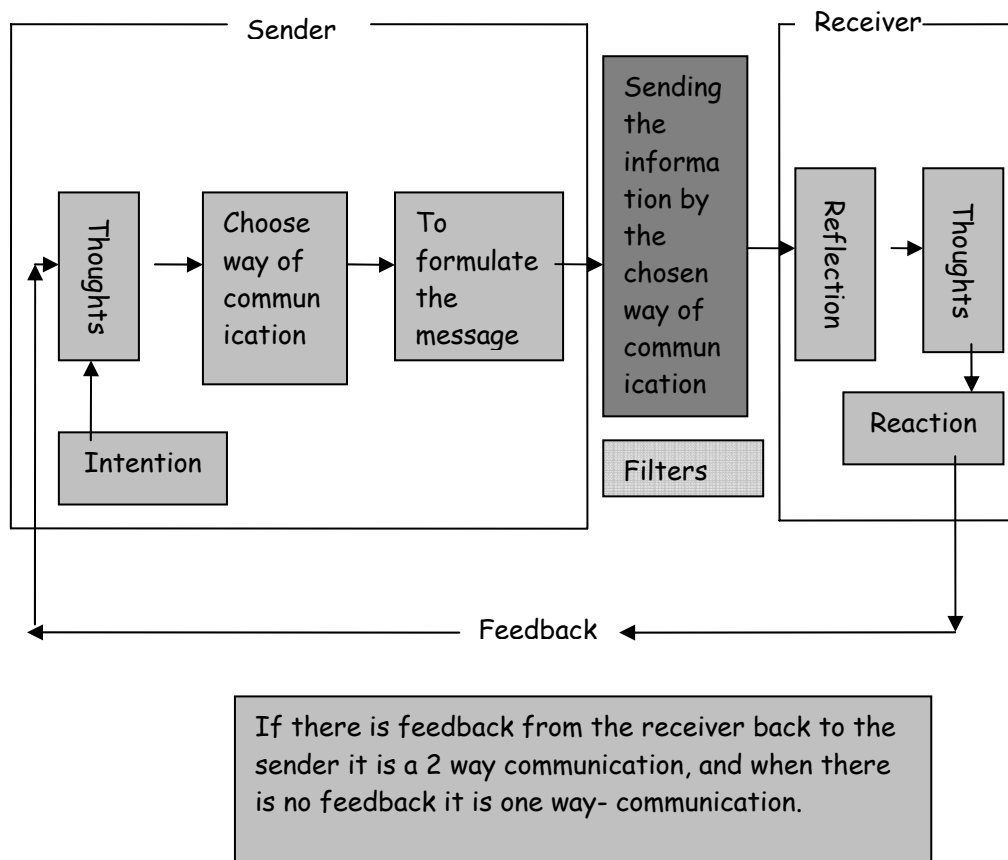
The message that a sender transmits may undergo major change before it gets to the receiver. The sender may non-verbally transmit to the receiver that he is bored, thus the message is not important. Facial expression, tone of voice or body language can affect the message. His/her own filters may modify the interpretation as to whether it is important or not.

Therefore the question stays: "Is what is being said, always what is actually heard?" Alternatively: "Is what is being said always understood?" One person, the **sender**, puts over a message to another person, the **receiver**. Then this person (receiver) becomes the **sender** of a return message to the one who is now the **receiver**. If the communication does not work, this can be due to a fault in any part of that circuit. It may be that the **sender** is not really sending – or that the **receiver** is not receiving. The message a sender transmits may undergo major changes before it gets to the receiver. This can be due to any number of factors, shown here as **filters.**

One of these filters may be noise. Noise can take three different forms.
- **Physical noise** (aircraft, generators, traffic etc)
- **Psychological noise** (frame of reference, prejudices, stereotypes, closed mindedness)
- **Semantic noise** (where the words of the message are simply not understood)

It could also be the way the sender looks. Speaking to a very attractive person of the opposite sex can affect what a person says and hears. The clothes a person wears and the way he/she walks, stands and sits all send out messages – they are all part of communication. They are all filters.

THE CLEARER AND MORE EFFECTIVE A TRAINER'S COMMUNICATION PROCESS IS, THE GREATER SUCCESS HE/SHE WILL HAVE IN TRAINING THE PARTICIPANT.

D. Communicate For Understanding

When the trainer is communicating with his/her participant, he/she must provide the participant with all the information. Providing some information may give the participant a rough idea of what the trainer is trying to teach, but without full information he/she may have to guess what the trainer wants to say. This is not communication.

Performance Objective 2: Describe the important elements in active listening skills.

IV. Listening

One of the most important skills needed in training is the ability to communicate, as without a process of communication it is impossible for the trainer to teach participants what they need to know.

One of the most important communication skills is the ability to listen; a skill neglected by many people. It is easy to jump to conclusions and assume that we know what another person is experiencing or needs. People are often selective in their listening and filter out essential information. Trainers must try to show concern and understanding in the way they listen.

Listening is an active action and is something that the trainer should be constantly doing. A good trainer is a good listener, and a good listener engages in **active listening**.

A person can become an active listener if he/she:

- **Listens** for feelings as well as facts.
- Makes and maintains **eye contact**.
- **Paraphrases** or **summarizes** back to the speaker what he/she has heard him/her say.
- **Creates an atmosphere** for listening by minimising interference (ex. moving to a quieter location, asking people to speak only one at a time, or turning off a TV or radio…)
- **Is asking questions** to clarify what is being said and to encourage the speaker.

When he/she is listening to someone, a person should not:

- **Rehearse** what he/she is going to say next. He/she cannot pay attention.
- **Judge** what he/she is hearing. This action will close the communication.
- **Look at his/her watch** or look away or any other **distracting behaviour**. They will appear disinterested.
- **Interrupt** what is being said.

- **Complete** the sentence.
- **Assume** that they already know what is going to be said.
- **Show non-verbal signs**, like yawning or fidgeting which also shows lack of interest.

A. The Listening Model

- **Hear**   The ability to listen as to what is being said.

- **Evaluate**   The time when the whole content is listened to and considered.

- **Respond**   The appropriate response is given.

A bad listener will evaluate without properly hearing all the content and respond too soon before he/she has all the facts. For a trainer, the need to listen to everything what the participant is saying before making a response is vital.

B. Paraphrasing

When a person paraphrases, he/she is repeating back to the speaker what he/she has heard him/her say and is checking out the accuracy of his/her listening. Paraphrasing is not repeating back word by word what was heard, but is merely telling the speaker in his/her own words what he/she understands as to what has been said by the speaker.

Group Activity:

The trainer should now run the listening skills exercise (Trainer Job Aid 4-1)

☞ *Performance Objective 3: State the different types of questions and their usage*

V. QUESTIONING

Questioning is an important skill for trainers, but this skill is often taken for granted. Like most skills, however, it can be developed with some knowledge of theory and technique, followed by plenty of practice. Trainers require good questioning skills to get the best from their participants and check out their learning and understanding as they go through a lesson, and also to stimulate discussion through facilitation.

As with most educational issues, there are many different theories put forward as the best way in which to do things, and the subject of questioning is no exception. In identifying the most suitable theories for this lesson, the participant should note that some of the information given overlaps between different theories.

VI. Most Common Types of Questions

A. Open Questions

We must use words that encourage the person to answer the question fully without the opportunity to answer with just a yes or no.

Open questions begin with the words:

WHAT   WHY   WHEN   WHERE   WHO   HOW

or phrases such as: **IN WHAT WAY........?**

Starting any question with one of these words or phrases usually invites an explanation. Consequently, they are possibly the best type of questions to ask if you wish to obtain new information. They are also effective in encouraging interviewees to provide an account in their own words. The result provides a more accurate picture to build upon and usually reveals stronger evidence than answers to closed, narrow or leading questions. An open question normally produces a considerable amount of information and sometimes interviewees may wander from the point. As a result, your full attention is necessary and you will need to observe, listen to and check everything.

Open Questions are used very frequently by trainers:

- o To ascertain facts from a witness
- o To ascertain facts from a suspect
- o When asking for a description
- o When completing a statement
- o When any detailed information is required

B. Closed Questions

'Are you……?   Was it……? 'Did you……? How many…….?

Questions which start like these examples invite only a short, confined or even one word reply. Closed questions have limited use within training and teaching, as they may not encourage the participant to give a thoughtful, full answer. For this reason, closed questions should be used selectively and where possible, followed up by an open question.

Closed Questions are useful**:**

- o When a yes or no answer is required from a witness or suspect
- o Where a selection between alternatives is required, for example, 'Was it an old Mercedes or a new Mercedes?'
- o When verifying identity
- o When ascertaining a quantity
- o When clarifying a point
- o When confirming or contradicting understanding of what was said.

C. Reflective Questions

The trainer repeats or rephrases the participants last words with a questioning inflexion in the voice. This type of questioning is useful to clarify understanding and sometimes to encourage the participant to say more. For example "So what you are saying is........?"

D. Value Loaded

A question, which conveys the values of the person asking the question. It influences person's thoughts and makes it difficult for the participant to identify his/her own values. For example "How do you feel about having a woman as your commanding officer?"

E. Multiple Questions

A multiple question appears to be one question, but in fact contains several questions. It is likely to confuse both the participant and the trainer. An example of this would be "Tell me what you think about corruption, is it common, do you think it should be stopped?" The participant may well answer only the last part of the question or just the easiest part. This type of questioning should be avoided and it usually shows that the trainer has not properly thought through the questions to be asked.

F. Leading Questions

A leading question assumes the answer which it expects to receive. For example:

"That was what you meant to say, wasn't it?"
"You understand don't you?"
"You don't mind, do you?"

G. Overhead

A question that is asked to the whole class or group not directed to any one person and is intended to provoke a discussion or reaction. For example, "What are your feelings about arresting very young people for stealing?" and "What do you think about legalising the use of soft drugs?"

Group Activity:

Using sticky labels or 'Post It' write the names of famous people, dead, alive or fictitious. Stick one on each participant so that they cannot see the name of the person who they will now be. The other participants will be able to see the names. Each participant must find out who they are by asking only Closed Questions. This can be achieved by pairing off the participants and allowing them 5 minutes each. By asking only closed questions they will only receive a yes or no reply and their questioning must be well thought out and planned to find out their identity.

This exercise will show how long it takes to find out facts when only asking closed questions.

VII. Principles of Questioning

Trainers constantly use questions of various types in all of their work, and a sound understanding of some principles for setting and using questions will assist them in their task.

A. Questions need to be clear and unambiguous

The trainer should not pose questions until they are not explained and could be answered by the participants at the present level of learning.

B. Establishing the start point for the input

The guiding rule is to teach from the known to the unknown. All participants will have a base point of knowledge. Start with what they do know and build gradually to teach them what they do not know.

C. Questions to induce learning directly

This means helping participants to work things out for themselves. A trainer can ask participants to give their experiences of the dangers from the use of motor vehicles. Further questions could deal with the need for different qualifications for drivers of different types of vehicles and bring out the participant's knowledge in relation to this. Again using their existing knowledge the subject matter could be further expanded by more questions of what they know.

D. Questions checking recall

The trainer needs to know the answers and acceptable variations before asking the question.

E. Questions to Avoid

These are the ones that can be answered "Yes" or "No" unless the trainer is going to follow it up with questions of "Why", "When" etc. The trainer should also avoid questions, which contain the answer, as a shrewd participant may well work out the answer from the question. Questions that call for a participant to use knowledge and reason out a situation are very effective.

When asking questions that need immediate answer, it is worth considering some techniques for making questions more effective. To ensure that all the participants consider the question and mentally prepare an answer, the trainer should ask the question to the whole group, wait a few seconds for them to consider the question and then nominate a selected participant to give an answer. This is summarised as:

POSE
PAUSE
POUNCE

F. Watch for participants who volunteer answers

The trainer should avoid always choosing them and try to ensure that all of the participants are tested. The trainer should also change the pattern of questioning spread around the participants so that participants cannot predict who is next.

G. Self-Test Questions

These can be supplied to the participant to test himself/herself whilst studying, or use them at the start of a learning session as a way of checking the level of understanding. They can be done by individuals or in groups. The answers can be self checked by

☞*Performance Objective 4: Identify effective techniques of asking questions.*

VIII. Effective Techniques of Questioning.

The trainer should plan key questions to provide structure and direction to the lesson he/she is taking. Spontaneous questions that emerge are fine, but the overall direction of the discussion has been largely planned.

The trainer should:

- Phrase the questions clearly and specifically to avoid vague and ambiguous questions
- Adapt questions to the levels of the participant's abilities
- Ask questions logically and sequentially
- Ask questions at various levels
- Follow up on participants responses

The trainer can elicit longer, more meaningful and more frequent responses from participants after an initial response by:

- Maintaining a deliberate silence
- Making a declarative statement
- Making a reflective statement giving sense of what the participant said
- Declaring perplexity over the response that was given
- Encouraging other participants to comment on what was said.

IX. The Use of Questioning During Training

Questioning participants during a training session can be done for a variety of reasons. This section will discuss four different reasons for using questions in a training session, and how each type requires a different method and style.

A. Ice Breakers

Questions are often used as part of ice-breaking exercises. This allows participants to get to know each other better and to feel more comfortable in the group. The questions best suited for this type of exercise are non-threatening, open ended questions. Non-threatening questions allow people to establish a relationship without worrying about offending others or embarrassing oneself. Open-ended questions allow people to talk a length of time that is comfortable, and encourage more than "one word" answers. It is often helpful to let people answer these questions in small groups before asking them to answer them in front of the entire class.

B. Determining Prior Knowledge

Questions can be used to help a trainer determine how much prior knowledge participants in a training session have. However, questioning is not necessarily the most effective means of accomplishing this task. In many cases, discussions with supervisors or pre-tests allow the trainer to gain a more complete picture of how much

knowledge participants bring with them to the training session. If the trainer decides to use some questions as he/she begins the session, he/she can use the following tips.

1. Ask specific questions which require specific answers.
2. Don't let one or two people answer all the questions - it may intimidate other participants, and it won't really give you a good overview of the knowledge of the entire group.
3. Be aware that people may feel like they should know things they don't, and that they may be embarrassed to admit that they don't know something. People need to feel comfortable in the learning process to ensure that optimal learning will occur.

C. Confirmation of Comprehension

Questioning can be used to confirm that participants understood what the trainer wanted to teach. Some of the issues applicable to the previous section (Determination of Prior Knowledge) are also relevant to this use of questioning. However, it can be good to use more open-ended questions, like "Explain to me in your own words how this process works." Also, when the trainer asks a question, they should always remember **Pose, Pause and Pounce,** and not call on someone until after people have had time to think about it. As with any type of questioning, it is important that the participants understand and believe that the trainer is not going to try to embarrass or harass them with questioning.

D. Probing Questions

The final opportunity for questioning in this section is a reminder of the probing question. This is used to help a participant discover the answer to a question or problem. When someone asks a question, it can sometimes be helpful to respond with a question in return. If the person can answer your question, it may help him/her to figure out the answer to his/her own question. This is more effective than simply telling someone an answer, as they have to process it more by trying to figure it out themselves.

Effective use of questioning is essential to the success of training. While ineffective questioning can cause people to be embarrassed, and not interested in learning. Proper questioning can help learners to be excited about the material at hand and want to know more.

Group Activity:

The trainer should distribute Handout 5-1 (Trainer Job Aid 5-2) and have them complete it individually. On completion the correct answers should be given and any lack of understanding clarified.

Trainer Job Aid 5-1

LISTENING SKILLS - EXERCISE

Tell the group to listen carefully to the following text, which should be read out to the group. No notes to be taken.

Start

When we listen actively our heartbeat becomes more rapid and our temperature rises-that is, our body uses up energy.

This means that **Active Listening** is hard work and it involves us in more than simply listening to the words. It means we must:

1. Listen to what is being said - **The Direct Line**

2. Listen for what is not being said -**The In-Direct Line**

3. **Respond** appropriately

The **Direct Line** is straight forward, as it is simply what we can hear. The **In-Direct Line** is the body language and non-verbal signals that we all give out and often this is done without knowing or intending to do it.

It is important that the trainer observes the group always keeping a good eye contact as such things as: confusion, frustration, boredom, eagerness etc. can be shown through body language. Body language is a powerful means of communication. Two people staring at each other are listening very effectively to each other, because even without speaking body language messages are given out.

Because these non-verbal messages are so important we must be very aware of what we do when we are listening in order to encourage the speaker and learn from and about him/her.

This means always paying attention. Encourage the person to speak by showing interest and asking questions. Don't allow yourself to be distracted, if you fiddle with a pen this can show a lack of interest; try and keep good eye contact but avoid staring.

End

The participants should now be asked to identify the key points from this talk. Ask the participants to write them down. Give them 15 minutes to complete the exercise and then check their results by reading out or showing as an overhead the list of key points

Listening Exercise – Key Points

- Listening takes energy

- Listening involves interpreting –
  - The direct line
  - The indirect line
  - Making the appropriate response

- Everyone emits body language and non-verbal signals. It can be done without knowledge and intention.

- We need to encourage the speaker by:

  - Paying attention
  - Showing interest and asking questions
  - Not allowing ourselves to be distracted
  - Keeping eye contact

- Seating is important for eye contact and encouraging the speaker

Trainer Job Aid 5-2

QUESTIONS – KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Participants should write down the type of question that is being asked. There are ten minutes to complete the sheet.

How do you feel that went?

Can you do that?

I bet you wish you could do that again, don't you?

Did you feel pleased about that, or would you do it differently next time?

Would that have been easier if you had been dealing with a man?"

What did you do?

Where does that take us?

What is your name?

How can I help you?

Are you feeling angry?

Am I right in thinking you were happy with your performance?

Can I help or would you rather carry on with that yourself?

Trainer Job Aid 5-3

Different ways to communicate

Speech
Writing
Body Language
Signals
Colours
Pictures
Telephone
Gestures
Radio
E-Mail
Internet

Barriers to communication

Noise
Proximity
Distractions
Body Language
Rank or Status
Uniforms