

# Dealing with Difficult People

Participant's Guide  
03CG-01

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Module 8

Building Rapport

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## Module 8: Building Rapport

### **Module Overview**

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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**

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Difficult people may be good 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.

### **Learning Outcomes**

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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.

## 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.

## What is Rapport?

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### Building Rapport

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There are three critical aspects to building rapport:


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

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**Defining cultural, behavioral and personal rapport**

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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



There are 3 main types of 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.

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



## Supervisor's role and rapport

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### Building Rapport as a Supervisor

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.

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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 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.

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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.

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

### Mirroring and Matching

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#### Mirroring & Matching

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- enables us to enhance our communication with others
- At an unconscious level the person will feel acknowledged and appreciated
- mirroring is simultaneous with the other person's behaviour, matching can be delayed

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, 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.

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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.

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.



### Body language and culture

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#### Examples of Common Behaviours

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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



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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.

Leg activity	See how their legs are crossed if they are sitting. Usually, you may choose to cross your legs, 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.

### Body Language Cues

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:



Behavior	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



Common behaviors that you can mirror & match

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- Body Posture
- Eye Movements
- Breathing
- Voice
- Head Position
- Hand Gestures



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:

Areas	Description
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

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Gestures	<p>a too rigid body posture means being anxious.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Another important 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.</p>
Tone of voice	<p>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"</p>

## Label the body language

It is often difficult to read body language correctly all the time. This exercise below lists four modes of body language that are often presented in a business setting.

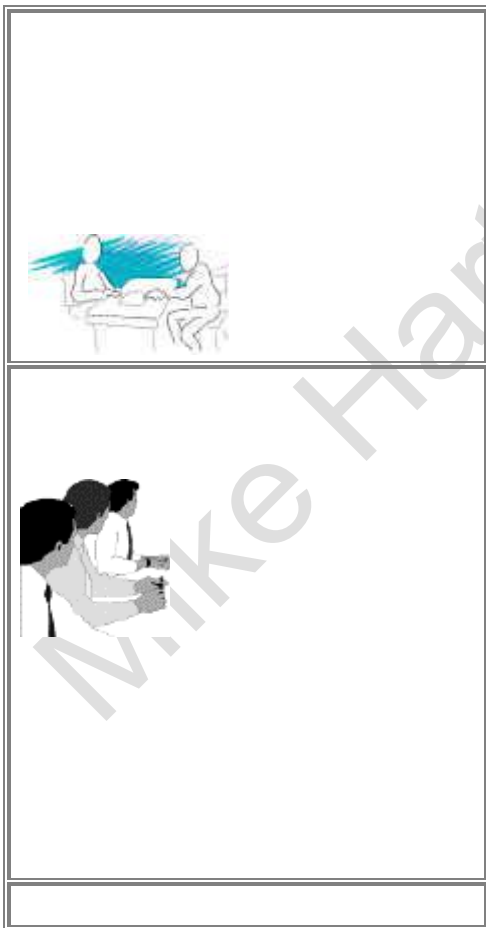
Can you identify them? The modes may be depicted more than once in the pictorial sketches below.

Which ones are ?

- Responsive (shows general concern to people or information)
- Combative (exhibits a behavior that enjoys to challenge and dispute)
- Reflective (shows that information gathering and thought planning is required)

Write the mode next to the sketches.

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## Sensory Language

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 Sensory Language Cues

- Visual**
- Auditory**
- Kinesthetic**



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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.

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**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”

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?

## Summary of Module

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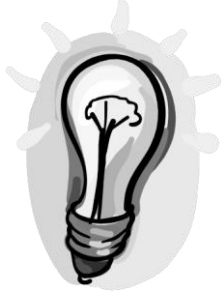
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- Rapport is essential demonstrates that you are interested in them
- Cultural, behavioral, personal rapport
- Mirroring and Matching
- Body Language and Culture
- Sensory Language

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## Check Your Understanding

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

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

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

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