Body Language, Use of Language and non-verbal cues

[00:00:04] **Brian:** Hello, my name is Brian Lutchmiah. I work for Diversity and Ability in the UK, and I'm a specialist working in higher education. I also have a background in working with professionals around the use of body language, linguistics, building rapport, and more in this short video of exploring some tips on how to build and establish rapport with people in the services that you work.

And so. I'm going to briefly touch upon a few elements that may be worthy of your consideration, whether that is an initial contact with people from an inquiry handling point of view and through to in-depth meetings, discussions, consultations, or assessments on a one-to-one or group basis when working directly with people.

Number one, the environment, as you'll know, a welcoming environment is most important for anyone accessing any service. Particularly when inclusion is a focus, the consideration of the environment we are in so that we provide a safe and nurturing space for discussion is incredibly important to ensure that individuals can engage and are able to communicate.

Assess the space you're working in is the space in the room, cluttered with posters or noise from outside distractions to consider. Consider this also, if working virtually with people. Close a window, if there is excessive external noise, for example, what they need in terms of communication and how they need it are two of the key elements to consider when working with individuals and the environment itself is a vital part of this.

Two: use of language and communication. Think about the general language that an individual is using. Listen to the words they are using. Are the preferred words that they tend to use as descriptors, ones that you can also use in meeting their communication need. For example, do they use the word feel when speaking.

Emotional terminology, terminology can be challenging for some particularly those with autism or mental health needs is an example and so thinking about communication with their use of language in mind is an important consideration. For those where emotional language and emotional processing may be challenging,

consider altering your use of language when asking any relatable questions, for example, instead of how do you feel about that? It could be, what do you think about that. Well, what are your thoughts or even, is there anything you would like to add. As these questions are more process driven. Also think about the general use of language that individuals are using in terms of how they see and view the world.

For example, if they are using action words, they may describe elements, visually using terms such as see, look, appear, or observe. Kinesthetically, for example, very practical language such as touch, grasp heavy, relaxed. Auditory, through lists words like hear, listen, resonate or similar may be used or through inner voice, such as think, sense, experience or learn.

Our inner voice is sometimes described as auditory digital, which is the thinking element of having time and space to think and process communication during a conversation.

Three: body language. So what about body language? How are individuals positioned? How are they sitting? What are their gestures? How are they using their arms, their hands and body. What about eye contact? Are they maintaining eye contact? Is it nervous eye contact? If so, is there no eye contact at all? For some with autism, no eye contact may be the norm.

What facial expressions do they have? What's their rate of breathing. Try to sit similarly through subtle matching of posture or mirror mirroring using the reflective matching posture. For example, switching a right-leaning posture and a chair to a subtle left-leaning an edge. Whilst these will differ for all, including yourself depending on the day or the time of day, the type of discussion

and mood all are elements that will constantly change. These are all examples that we all have an understanding of that very rarelydo we pay close attention to. Thinking about the individual that you're with working with is really important and adapting and adjusting to their need is as important in establishing not only good, valuable rapport, but also ensuring that the outcome of the discussion that you are having is reached in a satisfactory and professional way,

and with inclusion in mind, throughout. Remember also that we have common experiences that sometimes come up in conversations. It could be, the weather is wonderful today, isn't it? Or it might, of course be terrible. You could have just been on holiday or the individual may have been on holiday at a destination that you have also visited.

They may have spent time with family, may have challenges with family that we all may recognise. Now from a professional point of view, not sharing your personal circumstances is advisable to ensure your life outside of work is kept safe. However, sharing common similarities of experiences are also very useful and building rapport and ensuring positive communication in

any discussion.

Four: what about how we write and speak rapport is vital in written communications, such as emails or messages also, as it is in face-to-face conversations or group discussions. Think about the way in which you are speaking or writing. Elements to think about include: the pitch of your voice, the speed of your voice, the volume or loudness of your voice and allowing space for thoughts from response from an individual.

How can you adjust these to meet the needs of the person or people that you're working with? Practice with colleagues, if you need and share your learning with each other in the process, these are just a few tips for you to consider. Do you try them for yourselves, with friends, family, and colleagues, every individual is different

remember, and there is no right or wrong, however, In raising awareness and trying new techniques, you will find the best methods for you to establish positive engagement with the people you work with on an everyday basis. That's all for now. And we at Diversity and Ability trust that you find value in the content of this video.

Thank you for listening.