

Reading People



A coach reads and interprets the coachee's body language in the context of the coaching conversation, **not** as an isolated gesture.

The coach is aware of her/his body language and the impact it may have on the coachee.

These pointers can be used to increase your awareness, reflect on your coaching session, or as a checklist for feedback in your coaching triads practice groups.

Coach	Non-verbal behaviour	Coachee
	Eye movement e.g. looking down, up, left, right – hiding emotion, evasive, recollecting, reflective	
	Hands e.g. in lap, touching hair, ears, face, stroking near mouth, stroking other hand, moving ring round finger – supporting head	
	Tone of voice e.g. interested, curious - monotone, flat – abrupt, clipped	
	Breathing e.g. short breaths, fast breathing – calm – deep breaths, sighing	
	Speed of talking e.g. reflective and slow – fast, full, no room for silence	
	Change of seating position e.g. discomfort from content of what's being discussed or stretching questions	
	Position e.g. facing you or turned in another direction	
	Posture e.g. upright and well-balanced – slouching, arms and legs crossed	
	Jaw e.g. thrust forward, muscles tense or relaxed, twitching	
	Smile e.g. friendly, sincere – fixed, forced	
	Lips e.g. Tight or relaxed - nibbling	
	Prolonged silence e.g. reflecting or withholding	
	Gestures e.g. shaking foot / leg, tapping, fiddling with hands, pen, mobile phone – nervous, anxious, impatient	
	Nose e.g. touching, holding – inner awkwardness, discomfort	
	Mirroring e.g. each person's body language is like a mirror image of the other person's; use of same vocabulary	
	Eye contact e.g. steady and relaxed – staring into space – staring at you - distracted	

Practice reading people when watching TV. Relax, then look at the news or light entertainment involving interviews. Watch for posture, tone of voice, facial expression, how things are said as well as what is said.