

LEARNER GUIDE

Unit 6 – Working With Others



RSAS Training Strategy Project 2018

Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)



A message from
our CEO, Sally
Sinclair.

Dear colleague

Welcome to the NESAs Remote School Attendance Strategy Training Project. We recognise the importance of the role that you are doing and we are committed to supporting you throughout this role with a range of training offerings.

We appreciate the positive impact of your role within your local community and the opportunities you create every day by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to engage in school. We also understand that your role will be both rewarding and challenging, and we are confident that the training we are offering will assist you further in your role.

NESAs RSAS Training Strategy Project will involve a blended training approach that includes the following:

- Face-to-face forums with each forum running for three days in your local community
- Online training that will offer short courses that you are able to select
- Individual coaching and mentoring throughout your training
- The option to complete accredited units that will count towards a formal qualification

Our team are here to support you and we are available if you have any questions about this programme or the training you are completing. Our office number is (02) 9119 3090 and our email address is rsas@nesa.com.au. We are available Monday – Friday between 9.00-5.00pm (Sydney time) - please feel free to give us a call or pop us a line; we are more than happy to discuss any questions you may have.

We wish you all the best in this important role and we look forward to working with you throughout this project.

Yours sincerely

Sally Sinclair
CEO

Working with Others

Objectives

This unit aims to aid SASs and SAOs to handle difficult interpersonal situations and address the conflicts that may arise in day-to-day work activities it includes identifying the cause of conflict, establishing and implementing strategies for dealing with conflict and evaluating the response and outcomes. It does not include formal negotiation, mediation or counselling.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to

- Apply a range of communication strategies/skills with a diverse workforce and client base including assertiveness, listening, non-verbal communication, language style and problem solving.
- Provide support to team members to ensure goals are met
- Seek feedback from clients or colleagues and take appropriate action

Resources

The resources provided are a Learner Guide, Workbook and Trainer Guide.

This Learner Guide provides a resource to support the activities in the Unit 8 Workbook. It is designed to help trainers, RSAS officers and members of the community better understand how to work effectively with others.



This icon represents action when an individual task needs to be completed. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 6 Workbook



This icon represents action when a task is to be completed as a group. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 6 Workbook

Part 1: The People We Work With

The Apollo 11 Story.

The first men to walk on the Moon is one of the greatest moments in human history. And while Armstrong and Aldrin will always headline the accomplishment, they make up only about 0.0005% of the full Apollo 11 team.

It took an estimated 400,000 scientists, engineers, and technicians to send them to the moon, from the seamstresses who sewed 21 layers of fabric into each spacesuit to the contractors scattered across the country who had never made parts for space travel before.

When those 400,000 people watched the historic walk on TV on July 21, 1969, they each knew they'd been part of it. And that's what it means to work effectively with others. We can become part of something special.

Nothing much is ever achieved alone. We all have to work with others to get the job done and achieve our goals.

Identifying the key people you need to work with to get your job done, and understanding what they need from you, is the first step to working effectively with others. This is called a Stakeholder Analysis.

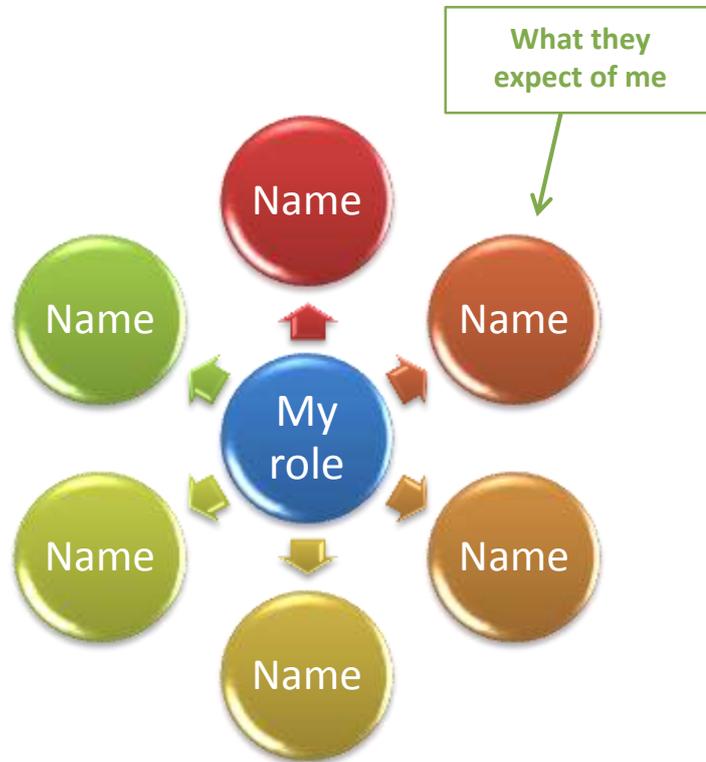


“Nothing is ever achieved alone.”



Activity 1: Who do you work with?

If you have not done this before, complete a Stakeholder Analysis for your RSAS role using the following diagram as a template



Managing and Meeting the Expectations of the People We Work With

When you completed the Stakeholder Analysis, you probably noticed that every person you work with has different expectations of you. Some of these people are our team members. Others are clients or community. Juggling these expectations can sometimes be hard. If you don't meet their expectations, this results in bad feeling or conflict.

However there are a number of expectations that are common to all the people we work. If we meet these expectations, our job is easier. These expectations are:

- Being respectful of the job they have to do
- Being courteous
- Being reliable

If they are team members they also expect that:

- We do our share of the work
- Communicate important information
- Work as part of the team rather than as an individual

**“Teamwork:
Simply stated, it is less
me and more we.”**

Anonymous



Activity 2: Working as a Team Member

Activity: As a group discuss what you think “working as a team” means in your role.

Draw a picture of a good team member showing these qualities.



Part 2: Communication and Conflict

No matter how hard we try, working with others is not always easy. There is always some conflict when a lot of different people work together.

The basis of a lot of this conflict is poor communication. We don't always hear what other people mean. In fact if you take a sample of three different people in a room and ask what they have heard in a conversation, you will most likely get three different responses.

"People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other."

- Martin Luther King Jr



Consider the following situation.

Rob, Barbara, Dan and Veronika were talking about improvements they needed to make to reach their team goals.

Rob, who was the team leader, asked everyone to start by giving the team a score on their current performance. Veronika said she thought they were performing at a standard of 8 out of 10. Barbara and Dan said 5 or 6. However when it came to Rob he said, "We are only at a 3."

Veronika's response was, "Why you think that?"

Rob became angry. What he heard was that Veronika was challenging him and telling him he was wrong. He started to yell at her.

Dan said he heard Veronika asking for more information and he told Rob this. Barbara wondered why everyone seemed to be getting upset. She thought Veronika was just confused with Rob's score. She told the others to calm down.

Veronika wondered what she had said that was wrong. "All I did was ask a question," she said "and now we are in an argument."

Communication Styles

One of the reasons these things happen is because people communicate in many different ways. There are four main styles of communication. Below we have given each style a name that sums up the way they connect with others.

Maybe you recognise your friends and family? And what style do you think most closely fits the way you communicate?

 <p>The Boss or Director</p>	<p>These people are very direct. They speak fast and are easily irritated if people don't get to the point quickly. They will interrupt and talk over them. They sometimes appear critical, yet they can get upset themselves if contradicted. Their style is seen as 'bossy'.</p>
 <p>The Promoter</p>	<p>These people always seem to have a good idea. They can be very persuasive when they put their minds to it. They seem very confident, speak fast and appear very passionate. They often say what is on their minds without thinking how it might affect other people. Quite often they will change their minds as they speak. It can sometimes be hard for others to keep up with them.</p>
 <p>The Thinker</p>	<p>These people like to have all the facts and figures before speaking up. They tend to speak cautiously, deliberately and slowly. They are diplomatic and try hard not to upset people when passing a comment. They are very logical and considered in their communication.</p>
 <p>The Socialiser</p>	<p>These people are good listeners and like to know what other people think before speaking. They have a warm tone of voice and often speak in terms of feelings. They don't like tension or conflict and either walk away from it or give in to other people to keep the peace.</p>

You are likely to come across all four styles of communicators in your work. To do a good job, you will need to learn to accept various styles, and you will also need to learn how to adapt your own style to communicate well with each type of communicator.

If you are a Thinker or a Socialiser who hates conflict, you may find Bosses and Promoters difficult to understand because these people actually enjoy arguments! Sometimes they will trigger conflict as a way of clearing the air. Sometimes they may create conflict to undermine authority. If you are a Promoter, you will sometimes get exasperated with Thinkers who seem too slow to you.

How can you deal with this?

The first step is to appreciate we are all different in our communication and no style is better than any other style. Every style has its strengths and weaknesses. We need Promoters when we want to sell our ideas. We need Bosses to help us get to the heart of the matter and keep our communications focused. We need Thinkers because they make sure what we say is logical. Socialisers make sure that we communicate in a collaborative way and we build consensus.

How to Communicate with the Different Styles.



Bosses/Directors prefer people to come to the point quickly and don't waste their time. They want solutions, so if you have a problem, think of a preferred solution before asking them what to do. It is best not to argue with them.



Promoters prefer positive communication and will listen to you more carefully if you are positive and passionate. They don't mind you disagreeing with them so long as it is not an unpleasant disagreement.



Thinkers need to have all the facts and like communication that is calm, quiet and logical. They do not like to be rushed.



Socialisers prefer to start any conversation with some "warm-up" or social talk. If you are suggesting changes, make sure you can tell them what others think about it if you want them to agree.



Activity 3:

a) Identify your communication style and the style of the people in your team.

b) Now you know what style you all are, decide on the best approach for the following situation.

‘Your RSAS manager is unable to attend a weekly meeting. They ask you to attend for them. You are busy. What do you say to your manager and how do you say it?’

Learning to be a Better Listener

The next step in learning to work well with others is to learn to listen properly. Listening is different from hearing, and it takes skill.

To listen, we have to stop thinking about what we are going to say in reply. We have to accept the words we hear and try not to respond emotionally no matter how angry or passionate the other person is.

Quite often people who are angry say a lot of things that have nothing to do with the problem. And if we are listening, we can unpick the problem from the anger.

This is how to do it.

- **Focus on your physical reaction.** Breathe deeply to send a message to your brain to remain calm.
- **Listen to what the other person is saying.** Don't always feel you need to respond to an outburst. If you can, let it go and move on.
- **Show you've heard him.** Calmly re-phrase the other person's argument. Sometimes people just want to be heard.
- **Show some empathy.** Acknowledge that this is a tough situation.
- **Find out more.** If you're the cause of the other person's frustration, dig deeper to find out why.
- **Take a break.** If you're the one getting angry or emotional, step out, go for a walk, and come back when you're feeling more grounded.

A good listener never interrupts, but waits until the person pauses and then checks if they really understand the problem.

When we check for understanding, we may use words like, “So what you are telling me is that you are upset because of the way the teacher has blamed Bernie for stealing. Is that right?”

Then we need to check what the person expects us to do about the problem. Sometimes this could be nothing. Quite often people just want to get rid of their frustrations by talking and the best way we can help is to listen.

Having a SAFE Conversation

If the conflict cannot be resolved quickly, it might be best to set up another time to have a SAFE conversation. If you have completed *Unit Two: Developing Our Children and Young People* or *Unit 16: Positive Conversations* you may remember the SAFE rules:

A **SAFE**¹ conversation means:

Setting a quiet time and place to talk

Asking questions to find out what might be wrong and listening to the answers.

Framing or drawing a picture of the results of the conflict

Exploring options to solve the problem and explaining what changes you would like to see

Setting Boundaries

Being upset is not an excuse for being abusive. Sometimes we need to set boundaries when people are angry.

Setting boundaries means being assertive.

If someone is calling you names, you should quietly request they not use that language to you by saying something like, "I'd like you to stop swearing at me, and then I'll listen."

If they continue being abusive, you might decide to end the discussion for the time being and request that they come back to you when they have cooled down and you can set up a SAFE conversation.

And remember to always use the word "I", not "You".

Why is this?

"You" sounds like you are accusing someone and will intensify the argument. "I" means you are taking responsibility for what you want and your feelings and this is less likely to make the situation worse.

All this might sound easy, but it takes a lot of self-control, so you need to practice!

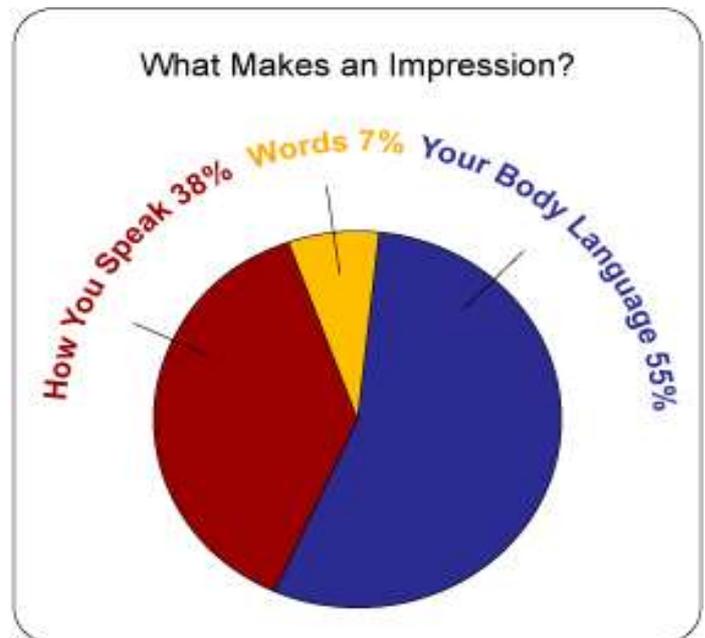
¹ Shakiba, Eleanor, *Difficult People Made Easy*, 2016

Watch Your Body Language

55% of our communication is not how we speak, but in our body language.

In *Unit 1: Positive Conversations*, we spend a lot of time on interpreting body language and how to use eye contact and facial expressions to improve communication. When it comes to dealing with conflict and creating trust in working with others, the things to remember most are:

- ✓ Keep your body language open (hands showing, arms loose or open)
- ✓ Keep your body at the same height level as the person you are speaking to. Don't stand over them as this can be interpreted as being aggressive.
- ✓ Look at the person you are speaking to.
- ✓ Keep your face neutral or smile.



Part 3: Providing Support to Team Members

Your team is a special group of people. These are the people you work with most closely in your role. A good team is mutually supportive, and together achieve the best results. However it is not always easy to form a good team.

Team Development

There are various stages in forming a team

Stage 1: Forming

When the team is new you may wonder what your role is in the team. You may find that you and/or other team members need:

- clear goals and objectives
- definition of tasks and roles
- clear work plans
- to identify standards and norms and ways to handle behavioural problems

Stage 2: Storming

You may find that team members become:

- defensiveness and competitive
- doubtful of their success
- concerned over excessive work
- tense and argumentative

You and/or other group members may resist the task demands; establish a pecking order; criticise group leaders or other group members; complain.

These are not pleasant behaviours and some groups do not develop beyond this stage if they don't learn to listen to each other and resolve problems.

Stage 3: Norming

At this stage you and/or other group members may:

- start avoiding conflict
- develop a high level of trust and respect for each other
- discuss problems constructively
- form friendships
- develop a sense of team cohesion with a common spirit and goals
- have high group morale
- establish and maintain group boundaries
- start becoming productive

During this stage the group will begin to start resolving problems.

Stage 4: Performing

This stage is what teams need to aim for.

You and/or other group members will:

- be willing to sort through group problems
- understand members' strengths and weaknesses

- accomplish a great deal of work

At this stage, everyone is proud to be part of the team and there is a high level of trust.

How to Form a Great Team

There are a number of ways to form a great team, but there are a few simple rules.

Great teams

- ✓ Set clear expectations and goals
- ✓ Have team members who are committed
- ✓ Are trained to be competent
- ✓ Communicate well
- ✓ Collaborate to get things done
- ✓ Help each other
- ✓ Trust each other
- ✓ Are willing to reach consensus when making decisions rather than forcing their own views on the team

They also have strong leadership. Part of the leader's role is to understand the stages of team development and help their team move through those stages to become effective.

We look at forming great teams in more detail in *Unit 11: Working as a Team*, meantime you might consider when you have worked with a great team, and what made them great to work with. And we can practice some of these things in the following exercise.

Ways You Can Be Supportive

- ✓ Notice if a team member is having a problem.
- ✓ Ask how you can help.
- ✓ Provide feedback when you see things need to be improved.
- ✓ Provide solutions rather than belly-ache about problems.
- ✓ Be positive.
- ✓ Don't talk about team members behind their backs.
- ✓ Don't deliberately cause conflict.
- ✓ Be grateful for help when you receive it.



Activity 4: Snakes: A Team Exercise²

The objective of this activity is for every member of the team to place a throwable (such as a soft ball) into the bucket in the middle of the room or ground, starting with the person at the front.

Form a line with your hands on the shoulders of the person in front. Everyone is blindfolded except for the person at the end of the line who provides direction to the bucket by tapping the shoulder of the person in front of them. The next person needs to repeat this instruction to the person in front of them by tapping them on the shoulder, and so on down the line, until the person at the front is given the direction to guide them to the bucket. They then go to the end of the line and become the guide.

No speaking is allowed.

This can be complicated, so your trainer will provide instructions.



² From [myparadigmshift.org /snakes-a-trust-team-building-activity-that-focuses-on-non-verbal-communication/](http://myparadigmshift.org/snakes-a-trust-team-building-activity-that-focuses-on-non-verbal-communication/)

Part 4: Asking For, Giving and Receiving Feedback

In Activity 4, you learnt the importance of feedback in reaching your goals. Feedback is essential in achieving anything we need to do and in making any improvements we want to make.

Asking for Feedback

Many people don't ask for feedback because they feel uncomfortable. They confuse feedback with criticism, but they are not the same thing.

Criticism is a judgement.

Feedback is corrective information.

The intention of criticism is often to wound or hurt.

Feedback is designed to help.

When seeking feedback, ask for specific information. Rather than, "What do you think?" Ask for specific advice such as, "I am wondering if you could go through this plan with me and see if anything needs to be changed."

If people feel uncomfortable about providing feedback, you may need to show you are open to it and prompt them by saying such things as, "I'm a bit confused over this part. Can you help me out?"

Giving Feedback

How you give feedback is also important. Many of us are so used to criticism, we find it hard to use the right words. The following may be helpful:

- ✓ Be specific
- ✓ Be respectful
- ✓ Be fair
- ✓ Make it constructive, not negative
- ✓ Say what you think went well in addition to what you think could be improved
- ✓ Take responsibility for your feedback. Use "I" not "we" or "everyone" when you are saying what you think
- ✓ Stay away from personal comments and concentrate on the event or behaviour you would like to see changed
- ✓ Make it clear that your intention is to be helpful

- ✓ Ask permission to give feedback. Not everyone wants it and if they don't want it, there is little point giving them feedback because they will ignore it
- ✓ Don't shame people
- ✓ Speak directly to the person you want to give feedback to, not to other people in the hope that the message will get back to them
- ✓ Choose a private place and avoid giving feedback in public.

Receiving Feedback

Accepting feedback can also be tough. It is natural for us to feel hurt when we think we have been doing a good job and we are told we need to improve.

The best way of handling it is to see feedback as a natural part of improvement, just as you did in Activity 4 when you guided your team member by tapping them on the shoulder to provide feedback on whether they were heading in the right direction. Don't take it personally.

- ✓ Listen carefully to the feedback
- ✓ Ask for clarification if you are unsure what needs to be changed
- ✓ Make the changes necessary
- ✓ And ask for further feedback as to whether you are now on the right track
- ✓ Thank people for their feedback whether it is good or bad feedback.

On the other hand you don't have to listen to criticism. The person who judges you; is dismissive; acts superior; goes behind your back or tries to put you down is not interested in helping you. And this is not feedback. In this case it is best to ignore them and not allow them to stand in the way of what you and your team want to achieve.

Sometimes you have to be firm in setting boundaries with such people and this is dealt with more in *Unit 10: Conflict Resolution*.



Activity 5: Giving and Receiving Feedback

Decide if the following statements are well-expressed feedback or not so good. Explain why.

Feedback	Good	Not so good	Poor
That dress doesn't suit you.			
I loved the way you sang.			
You need some more practice.			
The cake you made was delicious. I especially liked the way you decorated it.			
If you spoke a bit more loudly, I think people might listen to you.			
That report is full of errors that need correcting. I've put a red line through them for you.			
I heard the way you spoke to the Constable. I'm not sure if you realise it, but you sounded like you had really bad feelings towards him. That doesn't help us build a good impression. It would help us if you were more co-operative and answered his questions quietly.			
You always have excuses.			
Can't you do anything right?			
I'm not sure that is the best outfit to wear to the meeting. Everyone else will be dressed up a bit and you might feel left out. Have you thought about that?			
I've been watching the way you do that. Would you like me to give you some feedback or are you happy with the way things are?			

Finally, provide some feedback to your trainer on how you think this session has helped you.

*Thank You
for your Feedback!*



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