

LEARNER GUIDE

Unit 9 - Communication



RSAS Training Strategy Project 2018

Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)



A message from
our CEO, Sally
Sinclair.

Dear colleague

Welcome to the NESA 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.

NESA's 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sally Sinclair'.

Sally Sinclair
CEO

Communication

Objectives

The communication training unit is interactive and will assist RSAS workers to develop key strengths in communication techniques and understand the principles of good communication in different settings. This module highlights the main aspects of good communication and how to use it in individual, group, formal and informal settings.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- develop an awareness of more advanced communication techniques
- develop the skills and knowledge to become a strong communicator within their own organisation
- develop sound communication skills transferable to leadership positions
- understand the core principles of communication and how to use these within their role in engaging the broader community

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 9 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 9 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 9 Workbook

Part 1: What is Communication?

Communicating is about giving and receiving information. It is a two-way process. It is not all about talking. It is about listening too. And there are different forms of communication that don't use talking at all.

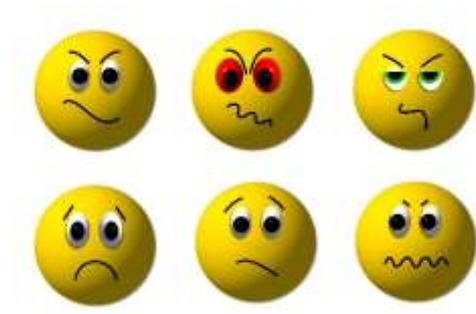
The three different forms of communication are:

1. Non-verbal communication

- Conscious body language such as pointing, shaking hands etc
- Unconscious body language such as slumping or bowing our heads
- Facial expressions and eye contact
- Sounds such as "Huh?" or "Mmmm"

2. Verbal communication

- Through spoken words
- Listening
- Pitch, tone and volume of voice



3. Written communication

- Reading (words)
- Writing letters, emails and reports
- Using numbers to communicate such as in bills and budgets

To be an effective communicator, we need to be good at all three forms of communication. However, when we say we have to be "good", we have to keep the context in mind.

Not everyone needs to be able to get up onto a stage to speak, though we all need to be able to express our feelings and ideas clearly.

Not everyone needs to be able to write a 20 page report, though we all need to be able to write simple messages and instructions; fill out forms and write to the level expected in our jobs.

However one of the most overlooked areas in communication, where we all need to be experts, is non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication accounts for 55% of the message people receive in personal, one-on-one and small group communications. Spoken words account for only 7%. So it pays to be good at non-verbal communication.



Part 2: Communication Techniques and Skills

Techniques in Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is very important when establishing credibility and communicating information in a variety of ways.

Do you know people around you who say one thing but you suspect they mean something else? How do we pick up these mixed messages?

The answer is through body language.

The aim of a good communicator is to ensure the message conveyed through their body language is identical to what they are saying. Here are some examples:



- A person who is speaking confidently also needs to sit or stand tall and look you in the eye. If they slouch or look away, then they don't sound so confident at all.
- If you want to motivate people, you need to be open in your body language, smile and use a lot of eye contact with eyes wide open.
- If you are conveying that you are sorry for something, you need to refrain from smiling or giggling which shows you are really not sorry at all. If you mean what you are saying, your eyes will be downcast and your shoulders will be lowered.



Activity 1: Practising non-verbal communication

Instructions:

- Each person in the class will be given a note with a message to convey to the class without talking.
- The class has to guess the message.
- After each role play, discuss what you saw as the most important signs that conveyed the message.

Some of the messages are below, but your trainer may choose others as well;

1. *I am very pleased to meet you.*
2. *This is going to be a great day.*
3. *I am a bit nervous about having to do this.*
4. *I am confused as to what I have to do.*
5. *Can you help me?*
6. *I hear what you are saying but I don't believe you.*
7. *I am getting a bit tired of this.*
8. *Let me think about it.*
9. *I haven't made up my mind yet.*
10. *I am feeling really confident.*
11. *I don't like what you are telling me.*
12. *This is not good.*
13. *I am listening.*
14. *I understand what you are going through*

Advanced Techniques in Verbal Communication

Listening

Verbal communication is not all about talking. In fact a lot of it is about listening. Communication is useless if you don't listen to and understand the responses that you get in regards to your message.

And listening isn't just using your ears to collect sounds. You need to understand the things that are said to you in a way that you can respond to properly. The chart below shows how to be a great listener.



Speaking with a purpose

It is important to know what you want to say and what response you want from the person or people you are speaking with BEFORE you open your mouth. If you don't know, it is better to wait and get your thoughts clear before you speak.

Speaking to the point

We need to keep our messages brief and stick to the point or people stop listening. The amount of time people can listen without losing interest is called their "attention span". This will be different depending on the person and what you are talking about. When you are talking about a subject they love, their attention span is longer.

On the other hand, kids have a very short attention span, particularly if you are correcting them.

One way of encouraging people to listen to you for a longer period is to tell stories to deliver your message. However, this takes lots of practice because even stories can be boring if you ramble.

In most cases it is best to be brief.

Giving and receiving feedback

Feedback is an important part of communication. You should be able to convey your information in such a way that the person you are communicating with can offer feedback or criticism on your information. They should also be able to ask questions if anything is left unclear.

Being able to give feedback without offending people is important. The best way to do this is:

- Summarise what the person has said and ask if you have heard them correctly
- Mention those things you agree with or think are good
- Ask for more information using open questions (see below)
- Say what, if anything, you don't agree with and why
- Be respectful in the way you speak, using the person's name



Being able to accept feedback without feeling offended is also important. To do this:

- Listen without interrupting
- Try to remain unemotional even if the feedback is negative
- Answer any questions as directly as possible
- Ask why the person does not agree with you if this is unclear
- Be honest if they have brought up something you have overlooked
- State your position
- Be respectful, and thank the person for their feedback.

Questioning

Being able to ask really good questions is one of the highest communication skills. No matter how much information people give you without being asked, you will never learn everything you need to know without asking a few questions. What type of questions should you be asking?

- **Closed-ended questions** are designed to get a simple yes or no response. This can be a good tool if you need to gather basic information quickly, or want to obtain an answer without a long or drawn out explanation.
- **Open-ended questions** will provide you with a broader and more comprehensive answer. Instead of asking "Do you agree with that?" (Which is a closed ended question because it can be answered with a yes or no) ask "What do you think?"



Activity 2: Practising listening, questioning and feedback

- **Instructions:**

For this exercise, divide into pairs.

- Give some information to your partner on how you think it is best to manage a kid who is cheeky.
- Your partner is to give you feedback on this (they may agree or disagree) and you are to respond to this feedback.
- Change places.
- This time around your partner will give you some information on how they motivate kids to go to school. Your job is to provide feedback, remembering you can agree or disagree.

What did you learn from this exercise?



Silence

We often feel we have to fill every second by talking, yet one of the most powerful tools is silence. By remaining silent, or pausing when we speak, we can often get more information, give ourselves time to develop a response, and develop better relationships with the people we are with. It also gives people time to think about what you are saying.

Choice of words

The words you choose to describe yourself or your co-workers can have an effect on how well people receive your message.

If you are trying to gain cooperation, use words like “we” and “us” to refer to the group. This will help them to consider themselves part of a team, rather than as an individual. “We need to come up with a plan for this”, implies that everyone is equal and can contribute to the group.

Alternatively, if you are trying to set yourself apart, as a leader or boss, using pronouns like “I” and “me” will do that. “I need to come up with a plan”, implies that you alone has what it takes to come up with a plan, and everyone else on the team will

Using words and expressions that everyone understands is also important. And it is also important to try to avoid words that are loaded with emotion or cause people offense be expected to follow it.

In your role as a RSAS worker, which way of expressing yourself is best?

Adapting to different audiences

The person or people we are speaking to is called our audience. Good communicators can adapt their style of language to different audiences. For example if our friends or family are our audience, we use informal language. However, when we are speaking in a work context, the way we speak is expected to be more formal because this is a different audience.

At the simplest level, we may greet our friends by saying, “Hi.” In a business context we would say, “Good morning/afternoon.”



Combining facial expressions and body language with words

Using the right facial expressions and hand movements combined with your words is the mark of a great communicator. This is called “alignment” or “congruence”.

Consciously thinking about the expression on our face and whether or not we are showing confidence or trust in the way we stand and open our arms is very important when delivering important messages.



Activity 3: Role Play: Using formal communication

Instructions:

One area where you need to use more formal communication is when you are asked to speak at something like a school presentation.

- Consider the following scenario.
- Make a short speech to the audience.
- Ask for feedback from your trainer and the class.

Scenario

Joel, one of the kids in your care, has had 100% attendance for the term. He hasn't missed a single day and this is a big achievement. The school principal has invited you to the end of term assembly. He wants you to present Joel with a Certificate and congratulate him. He hopes you can motivate some more kids to attend school more regularly.



Part 3: Core Principles of Communication

As you can see, communication is complex because there are so many different areas and contexts. However there are eleven core principles or rules that cover all communications and the techniques we have discussed. And if we can follow these rules, we will be great communicators

These core principles are:

1. Know your audience (that means the people you are speaking to)
2. Know your purpose
3. Know your topic
4. Anticipate objections
5. Present a rounded picture
6. Achieve credibility with your audience
7. Follow through on what you say
8. Communicate a little at a time
9. Present information in several ways
10. Develop a practical, useful way to get feedback
11. Use multiple communication techniques





Activity 4: Discussion



*Stan Grant, television journalist, is a Wiradjuri man.
His speech on racism is a model of speaking with a purpose. See YouTube <https://youtu.be/uEOssWIrw0I>*

As a class group identify two or three people you think model good communication skills, following all the core principles. Discuss how they do this.





Activity 5: My Skills

Instructions:

Being aware of the level of our own skills and what skills we need to concentrate on developing further is an important step to becoming a great communicator.

Take a few minutes to consider your own communication skills from what you have learnt today.

Put a cross in the box showing whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement as it applies to your skills.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I always know what I want to say and why before I start speaking.				
2. I keep what I say brief and to the point.				
3. I know I can make myself clear.				
4. I listen to what other people say without interrupting				
5. I know how people are feeling about what I am saying				
6. I ask for feedback and I am willing to listen to feedback				
7. I know how to ask open-ended questions to get information				
8. I have confidence I choose the right words when speaking and don't offend people.				
9. I can adapt how I speak to be more formal				
10. I am comfortable with silence.				
11. I am aware of my facial expressions and body language when I speak				
12. My non-verbal messages always match what I am saying.				
13. I am willing to take responsibility for how people react to what I say				
14. I am able fill in forms and write to the level required for my job as a RSAS worker				

Developing better communication skills

If you are like most people, there will be a few areas where you think you need better communication skills. So how do we develop these skills?

Most of our skills were developed by observing and copying the people around us. Some of our skills came from what we learnt at school and from reading books.

To develop our skills further, we need to use the same method by doing two things:

- Observe people with good communication skills; listen to them; watch them, and copy what they do. These could be people on radio or TV, or people you know and work with.
- Continue our own out-of-school learning by reading books and be willing to take up opportunities to educate ourselves including seeking out coaching or mentoring. We are never too old, and should never be too proud, to learn!



Linda Burney, the first indigenous woman to enter the House of Representatives is an advocate for education as the best way of providing opportunities for all. Her expertise in using facial expressions and body language to enhance her communication can be seen in this YouTube video <https://youtu.be/38EALG-wMX4>



Activity 6: My Development Plan

Instructions:

- Go back to your skills audit in Activity 5. Make a list of the skills you would like to concentrate on developing over the next month.
- Make a note of the things you can copy from those people you have identified as good communicators in Activity 4.
- Decide what else you can do to develop these skills.

Note: *Don't be too ambitious. Start small. It takes a long time to be as good at communication as Stan Grant who is a trained journalist, or Linda Burney, one of our foremost indigenous politicians.*

Skill	People I can observe and copy	Other things I can do
Eg. Speaking with a purpose	Stan Grant – how he gets to the point fast	Practice on my supervisor

Note Page:



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