

## Mentoring

# Communication Skills.

Communication skills are important for engaging with other people. They need ongoing development and practice. Good communication is made up of a few skills, and different situations call for different skills to be brought into play.

### Positive Body Language

Positive or open body language helps us be more approachable — helping others feel at ease with us.

Open body language looks like:

- An open stance
- Being mindful of how you hold your arms
- Making appropriate eye contact
- Using active listening techniques such as nodding, acknowledgments, etc.
- Ensuring that your body language reflects your verbal language.

### Limit Setting

Setting boundaries in a relationship is essential. Some tips for doing this successfully include:

- Involving both people in the process
- Being clear about the behaviour you expect
- Talking about what to do, rather than what not to do
- Referring to the program Code of Conduct and other policies to support you in this process, and also finding out what to do if boundaries are crossed.

### Problem Solving

It's easy to want to solve a problem for someone else. This isn't always the best action though.

When someone else is faced with a problem, ensure you:

- Don't try and solve the problem for the mentee
- Help them to identify possible solutions themselves and how they might be implemented
- Work with them to really identify the issue at hand
- Help them to process why a potential solution may have negative consequences
- Use open ended questions to allow them to think through their responses.

### Open Ended Questions

Open ended questions can help you have conversations and build relationships..

Examples might include:

- "How was school today?" vs. "What assignments are you working on at school?"
- "Are you ok?" vs "How are you feeling?" or "Why are you crying?"
- Beginning sentences with "what", "when", "why" or "how."
- Avoiding questions that require a yes/no answer

