

Exercise – Body Language

Form into pairs with **someone you don't know well**:

Stand on opposite sides of the room facing each other.

- Walk towards your partner directly in front of you, maintaining eye contact and stop at distance where you feel comfortable.
- Do you have the same “comfort zone”? If not, step back until you do.
- Turn a little to one side. Could you now feel more comfortable moving closer? Does it feel less threatening?

Try **open** stances:

- Legs apart, hands by your side, or palms facing out, as opposed to fists clenched
- Legs apart, with hands clasped behind your back.

Try **closed** stances:

- Legs together, then apart, with arms folded in front of your chest
- Legs apart, with hands clasped in front of your thighs
- Finally, with legs apart and hands on hips.

How do different styles come across?

Discuss with your partner how it feels if there are big differences in height or body size.

Seating:

Try it with one person standing and the other one seated, then swap with each other:

- Do either of you feel threatened or “stood over”?
- Try again with both seated - does it feel as if you can be closer than when you are both standing?
- Now try turning aside while seated. Does it feel more relaxed than directly facing, with continuous eye contact?

With both seated, have a brief conversation with your partner, with both of you staring intently at each other.

Now try having a conversation without *any* eye contact – what was the difference in feelings between the two situations?

No Body Language:

With both of you sitting back to back, have another conversation. Imagine you are on the phone - **vary your tone, rate, volume, and emphasis on words** etc. What is the impact of those when you can't see any body language?

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