

Bodily Communication Competence Using SOLER

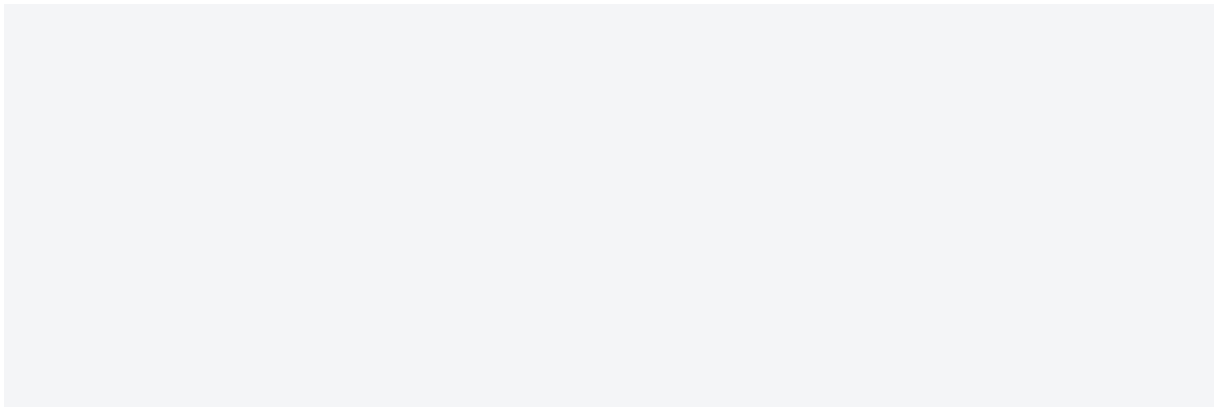
Non-verbal skills can be taught but benefit most from practice. The SOLER mnemonic, introduced by Gerard Egan (2007), can be used to practice non-verbal communication in a culturally competent manner (Rogers et al., 2020, p. 26):

- S – sit squarely
- O – adopt an open posture
- L – lean toward the client
- E – keep good eye contact
- R – try to relax and appear natural

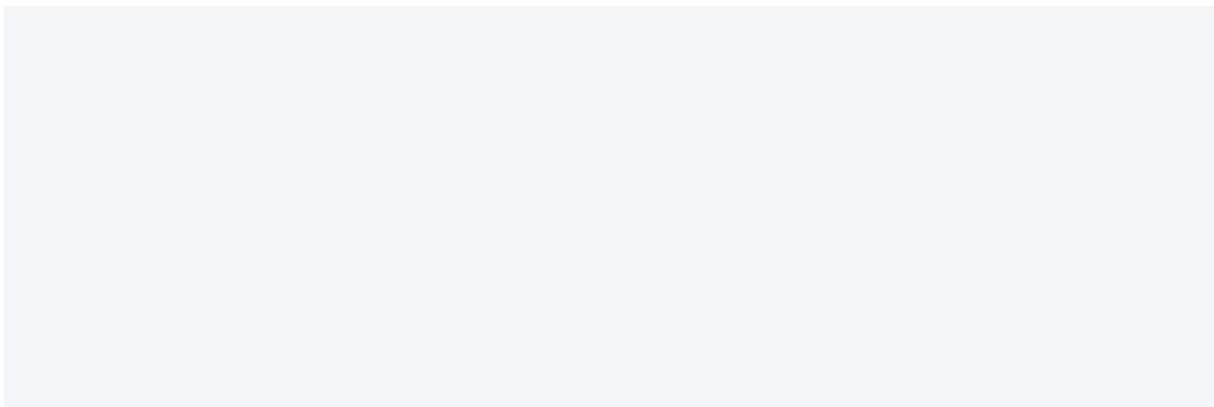
Use the following questions to reflect on your bodily communication during a recent meeting and consider the improvements you could make in the future.

Ask yourself:

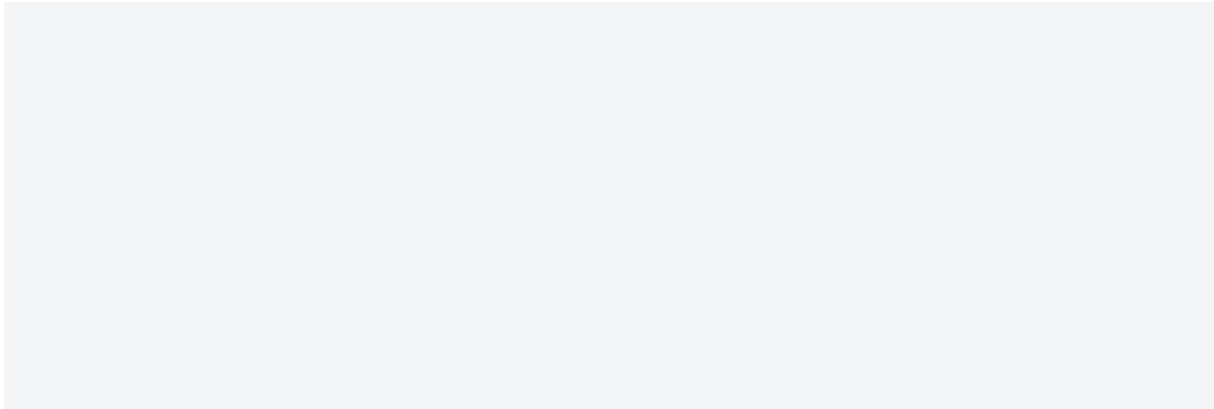
Did I sit squarely (facing the other person) and maintain an upright position? If not, what was I doing?



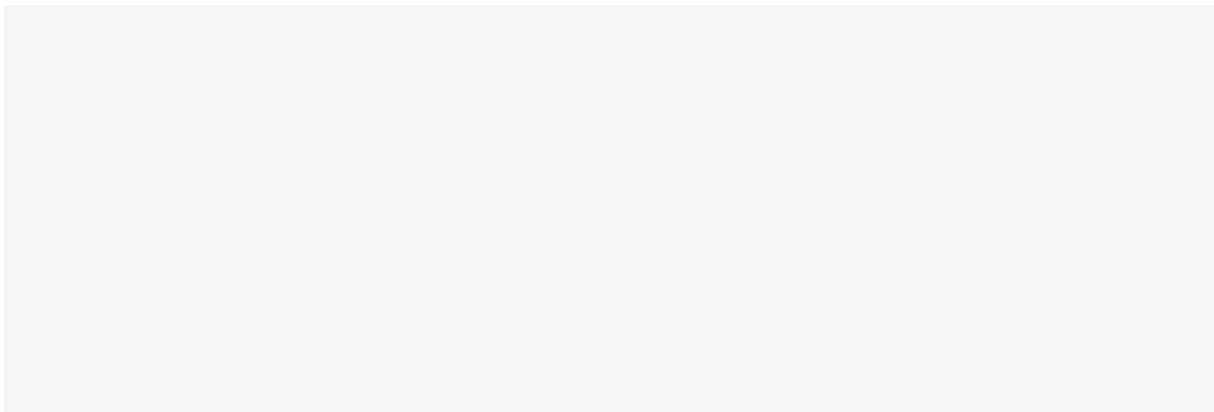
Did I adopt an open posture (arms and legs were not tightly crossed)? If not, what was I doing?



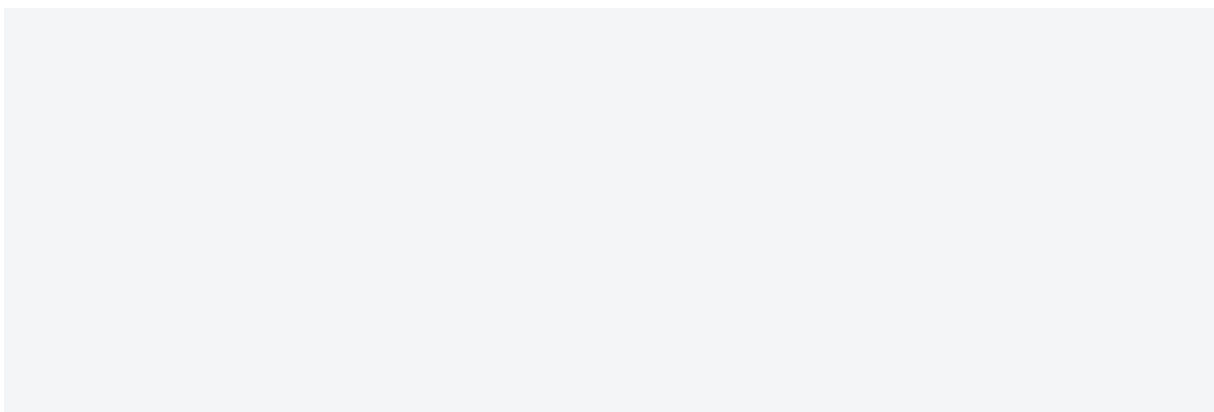
Was I leaning in and actively listening to what the individual was saying? If not, what was I doing?



Did I maintain good and regular eye contact (or was I looking at the clock or other objects around the room)? If not, what was I doing?



Did I appear relaxed and natural? If not, what was I doing?



Reflect on the non-verbal messages you were sending. Consider how you could change them and improve communication from now on.

References

- Egan, G. (2007). *The skilled helper: A client-centred approach*. Belmont, CA: Thomson.
- Rogers, M., Whitaker, D., Edmondson, D., & Peach, D. (2020). *Developing skills & knowledge for social work practice*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

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