

Building Rapport

A Strong Bridge of Connection



- ❖ **Be Genuine.** Rapport is easier to obtain when the other person sees you as genuine in your comments and interactions with them. While they may not like what you are saying or asking, if it is done with an approach of respect and truthfulness, most people will respect this and respond accordingly.
- ❖ **Smile.** This is a universal gesture of goodwill regardless of culture, nationality, or religion. Research indicates that individuals who receive a smile from another feel accepted and not judged.
- ❖ **Listen carefully.** Most people do not listen to each other in an open and patient manner. If the interviewer is attentive, is nonjudgmental, and shows interest in other people, a very positive emotional dynamic will be put in place, even if the interviewee is very distrustful and hates what the interviewer represents (e.g., the administration).
- ❖ **Mirror the interviewee.** This refers to mimicking the interviewee's body language and words, which takes attention and practice. If it is done too obviously, it will be noticed and rapport will not arise. It may mean sitting the same way, making similar gestures, using some of the same words, even using similar emotional tones of voice.
- ❖ **Avoid blunders.** Be aware of cultural differences and things that might offend the interviewee. Displaying a cold and unfriendly demeanor can be considered an insult. Conveying impatience, such as glancing at one's watch or tapping one's fingers on the table, can be considered an insult. Certain gestures may be an insult in some cultures.
- ❖ **Ask open ended questions.** An open question provides many avenues to an answer. Closed questions have limited answers possible and tend to limit conversation and can have a negative impact on rapport building.
- ❖ **Find hooks, beware of barbs.** Hooks bring us closer together (common interests, similar backgrounds). Barbs drive us apart, raising defensiveness.

