

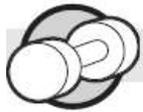


## A2. Tools for the training of trainers (coaching capacity building)

Acquiring coaching skills is a long process. For the aims of the project, social workers will need quite a basic set of skills in order to improve their job placement expertise. For the purpose of the *We Go!* Project coaching skills include: *building rapport or relationship; acquiring of different levels of listening; using intuition, asking questions and giving supportive feedback*. A short training on fundamental coaching skills follows.

### SKILL ONE – BUILDING RAPPORT (feeling of trust between the parties)<sup>1</sup>

The word ‘rapport’ describes the amount of warmth present in a conversation, and is affected by how ‘related’ or ‘connected’ the conversationalists feel. If you have good rapport with someone, you will normally feel more comfortable and relaxed in their company.



#### **An exercise: Who do you have great rapport with?**

Think of a friend or colleague with whom you believe you have great rapport. This will probably be someone with whom you have a good, easy-going relationship, someone who you feel comfortable talking with, someone whose company you enjoy. As you think about them, ask yourself:

**Q:** *How do I feel when I'm talking to them?*

**Q:** *What does it feel like to be with them?*

**Q:** *What similarities are there between me and this person?*

Rapport builds itself on features of ‘sameness’. Where there is a high degree of ‘sameness’ (see the figure below) between two individuals, we build rapport more easily.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Coaching Manual (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – The definite guide to the process, principles & skills of personal coaching” by Julie Sterr

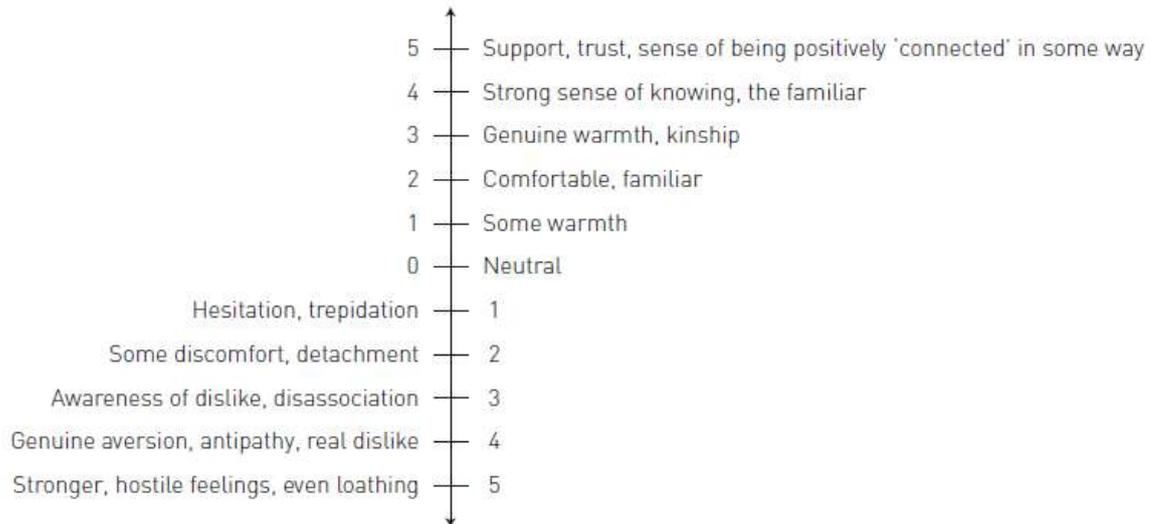
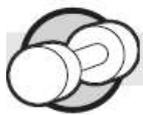


Figure: Scale of rapport (inspired by Genie Z. Laborde)

Categories of 'sameness' can include many different aspects, for example:

- Physical appearance/clothes.
- Body language/physical gestures.
- Qualities of voice.
- Language/words used.
- Beliefs and values.



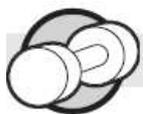
**An exercise: Go watch some rapport**

This is a nice, easy exercise. Go anywhere where there are couples, or groups of people. Spend some time watching them talk and interact. Notice the 'dance' between them: how they move together, away from each other, how they stand or position themselves in relationship to each other. Ask yourself the following questions:

*Q: How do you know whether people are enjoying each other's company by watching them?*

*Q: How can you tell whether people are old friends or strangers?*

*Q: What seems to be affecting the way people move or behave?*



**An exercise: Change your meaning and not your words**

Using the phrase 'Yes all right then', repeat it three different times, changing the quality of your voice each time, using the following characteristics:

- Bored and slightly irritated.
- Trying to hide your excitement.
- Resigned but compliant.

Notice how the meaning or intention of the phrase changes each time your voice quality changes.



### **An exercise: Change your voice**

Find someone who speaks in one of these ways:

- Much more slowly than you.
- Much more loudly or quietly than you.
- In a much lower or higher pitched voice.

If you want a 'stretch', you can also do it with someone who speaks much more quickly than you do, but be warned, it can be a challenge to keep up! The first time you do this, I'd recommend you tell the other person what you're doing. That way you can find out how it felt for them, how comfortable they felt, etc. When you think you've mastered the technique, use it whenever it seems appropriate for rapport.

#### **Step one**

Have a conversation with them, about something they are interested in, perhaps a hobby or particular area of study or learning. As the conversation progresses, gradually match their pace of speaking a little more closely. If they speak more slowly, gradually slow down your speech; if they are quiet, speak more quietly. Notice how your focus or attention has to change in order for you to do this. Do this as naturally as possible. Often slight adjustments work better than becoming an exact match of the other person.

#### **Step two**

Afterwards, consider the following questions:

**Q:** *What did you have to focus on to be able to do this?*

**Q:** *What effect did your 'matching' seem to have (on you and on the other person)?*

**Q:** *How did this affect the amount of rapport you felt?*

If possible, ask the same questions of the person you were talking to. That way you'll get even more learning from the exercise.



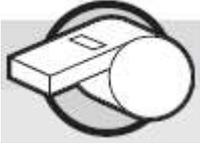
### **An exercise: Who's playing word games?**

Over the next few days, observe other people talking together in your work or social life (or simply go somewhere else and eavesdrop!). Listen to conversations, in particular the actual words and catchy phrases that are being used. Judge for yourself the amount of rapport between people. Then consider:

**Q:** *What types of buzzwords or phrases are being used?*

**Q:** *How much are these words being copied or repeated by individuals?*

**Q:** *What effect is this copying having on the conversation?*



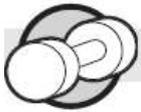
### **Learning corner: Watch my feelings**

#### **Where we want to acknowledge feelings**

Sometimes, we need to acknowledge someone's feelings as a way of empathizing with them, or demonstrating an understanding of what they've said. Here, it usually works best to use the exact words or phrase they use. This is especially true when those feelings are negative. For example, if they say they're upset, say 'I appreciate that you're upset'. If they say they're worn out, use the words 'worn out' (not 'fatigued' or 'dog-tired').

#### **Where we want to influence feelings**

Sometimes, you might want to reduce the significance of someone's feelings in the conversation. Maybe you wish to make them feel a little better about what they felt, or help them calm down a little. If you have good rapport, use a diluted or reduced version of their word. For example, they say 'I'm scared stiff of making presentations' and you don't want to get 'stuck' in that feeling. So when you refer to these feelings, you might not use 'scared stiff' but instead use 'apprehensive' or 'uncomfortable', e.g. 'I guess you'd want to let go of some of those feelings of apprehension wouldn't you?' You can then begin to use more positive imagery and feelings, e.g. 'What would it take for you to feel fantastic about giving a presentation?'



#### **An exercise: Increasing and decreasing rapport**

This is a very simple, basic technique for demonstrating our ability both to increase and decrease rapport. It works by increasing or reducing a physical sense of 'sameness'. To do it, you'll first need a willing partner and somewhere quiet to sit where you won't be interrupted. Tell your partner you want to do an exercise in rapport, but don't go into any detail. Ask them to talk about something they can discuss easily, e.g. a favourite holiday or pastime.

##### **Step one – talk and observe**

Begin the conversation. Ask your partner questions, get them talking. Notice their physical posture and gestures as they speak.

##### **Step two – increase rapport by matching**

Continue talking to them, and begin subtly to match their posture and gestures. If they're leaning forward, lean in; if they're moving a lot, increase your own movement. Continue doing this until you are comfortable that you're matching well. Do it for a couple of minutes.

##### **Step three – decrease rapport by mismatching**

Continue talking and begin deliberately to mismatch what they're doing. Fold your arms, look away, cross your legs – be really different! Do this until you're sure it's had an effect – or until you can't carry on for laughing. (It's not easy and they'll know you're doing it!)

##### **Step four – talk about what happened**

Explain to your partner the three-step process, then ask them:

**Q:** Did they notice when you started matching them?

**Q:** What effect did matching them have?

**Q:** What effect did mismatching them have?

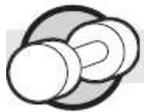
##### **The optional 'stretch'**

If the exercise seems too easy, then match and mismatch on any (or all) of the following:



- Their breathing.
- Their voice qualities – pitch, pace, tone, etc.
- The key words or phrases they seem to use.

One of the best ways of building rapport with someone is through your own intention. Your intention during a conversation can have a dramatic impact on the sense of relatedness you build with the person you're with. By 'intention' we mean your sense of purpose, or perhaps your aim for the conversation. Shifting our intention changes our focus. This can be useful where you've tried some simple matching but rapport still isn't as good as we'd like.



### **An exercise: Use your intention**

When we focus our minds on our intention, our thoughts and behaviours can often marshal themselves to show us the appropriate way forward. So go and have a conversation with someone you know quite well, but not very well. If you can choose someone who you'd like better rapport with than that might work even better. During the conversation, have an intention to have great rapport with the other person. You want to develop that warmth and sense of connection that comes from having great rapport. You might use a word or phrase to remind yourself occasionally of this intention, for example: 'warmth and openness' or 'relationship'. During the conversation, simply remember the thought or phrase as much as seems appropriate. Remember that you also want to be able to have a conversation, so only concentrate on the thought as much as seems comfortable. If the thought begins to act as a distraction, then forget it – let it go.

After the conversation, ask yourself:

**Q:** *What was the rapport like within the conversation?*

**Q:** *How did using your intention appear to affect your rapport?*

**Q:** *How could you use your intention in the future?*

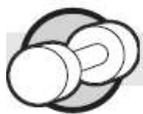
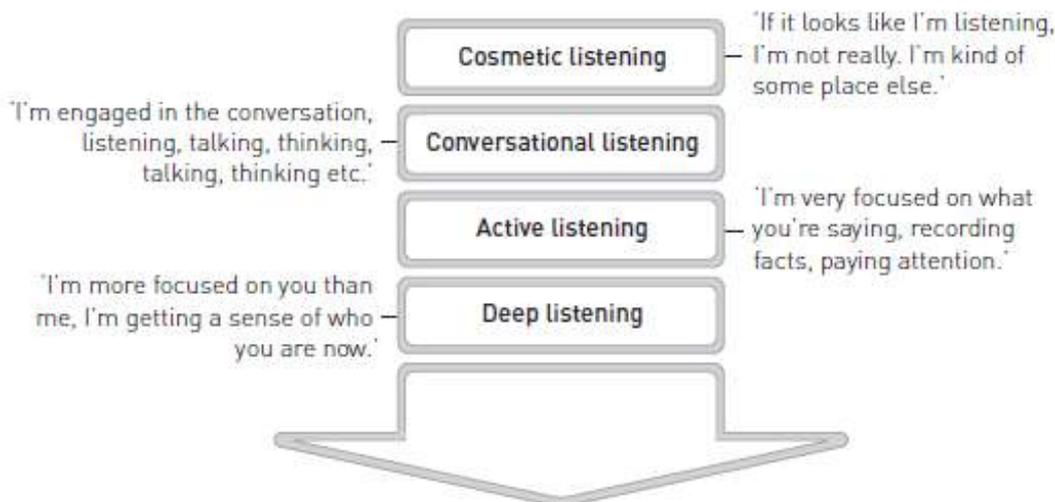
As a coaching skill, the ability to influence levels of rapport during conversations enables a coach/counsellor to gain trust, engagement and influence during coaching conversations. Good rapport refers to the quality of relationship happening in the conversation, as the conversation is happening. It is directly affected by our thoughts or feelings being in some way the same or different from the other person. Where we are alike, we like, but where we are different, we feel detachment or even dislike. Traditional techniques of simple physical matching might have a level of influence. However, other factors may be much more important. Our sense of shared values, common aims and intentions can be the underlying factors that create real relatedness within the conversation. Over time, the positive development of a coaching relationship is affected by principles such as integrity, consistency, openness and trust. Our ability to act consistently from these principles influences the coaching relationship and the behaviour of the coached. The demands on the coach for high standards of personal behaviour require both commitment and self-discipline. The rewards of great coaching relationships and a clear conscience are worth the effort!

## SKILL TWO – DIFFERENT LEVELS OF LISTENING

There are actually several different forms of listening, although generally we discuss the topic as though there were only one. We ask, ‘Are you listening?’ and we expect the answer to be ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, as if there’s a listening switch that we can turn on or off. Perhaps a more accurate response would be ‘Sort of . . .’ or ‘Yes but just to your words’ or ‘All the way to behind what you’re actually saying!’ Our listening changes with the amount of focused effort we direct towards what (or who) we’re listening to. After all, if you’re only ‘half listening’ doesn’t that take a lot less directed effort than ‘listening intently’?

The figure below shows different forms of listening as though they were actually levels. As our level of listening deepens, so does our focus and attention on the person we are listening to.

Levels of listening: *cosmetic listening, conversational listening, active listening and deep listening.*



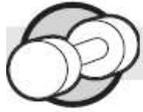
### An exercise: Listen and learn

Use your normal conversations today to consider the following:

**Q:** *How often do you pretend to listen to someone – and don't really listen?*

**Q:** *How is your listening different, i.e. within different circumstances, or with different people?*

**Q:** *What effect does the quality of your listening seem to have on other people or the conversation?*



## An exercise: Developing deep listening

<b>What is this?</b>	An exercise for listening to someone that creates a deeper understanding of them and their thoughts.
<b>How would I use it?</b>	You'll need someone to do this with you, who knows what you're doing and why. That way you can ask them for feedback and you'll learn faster. Once you're comfortable with the style of listening, you can use it anywhere you like. Use it anytime you want to give someone a really good listening to!
<b>Why would I do this?</b>	As your listening to other people improves, you will benefit from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ A clearer understanding of other people, their situations, thoughts and issues.</li> <li>⇒ An ability to develop better rapport or relationship with others.</li> <li>⇒ A more relaxed style of conversation with others.</li> </ul>
<b>How long will it take?</b>	Approximately 45–60 minutes, depending on what the person you are working with wants to discuss.

### Set-up

Ask your partner to think of three situations they'd like to create change around. These might be problems, minor frustrations, or goals and objectives they already have. If they can only think of a couple, that's OK – a third often pops up during the conversation. You are going to ask your partner to talk about each of the three situations or issues, one after another. Your role is that of listener, and your partner is the speaker.

### The conversation – step by step

**1** The speaker talks about their three things (problems or situations they want to change) with the listener. This should take about 30–40 minutes. During this time the listener may ask questions, acknowledge points raised, clarify information, etc.

**2** The listener then takes about 10 minutes to summarize back to the speaker:

- What the three issues or situations are.
- How the listener feels about them.
- What else seemed unspoken, yet present or relevant to the conversation.

**3** Then the speaker gives the listener feedback, specifically:

**Q:** *How 'listened to' did they feel, e.g. how well did they feel the listener gave them their full attention as they were speaking, and how well did they think the listener understood them?*

**Q:** *What effect did the listener's 'listening' have upon the speaker, e.g., 'It made me talk more, made me feel like this . . .', etc.*

**Q:** *How did the exercise affect how the speaker now feels about the three things?*

During feedback, the speaker should give both their experience, e.g. what they felt, and what caused that experience. For example, the speaker might say, 'I felt listened to because you asked me questions to help you understand what I was saying'. It is important to observe specific behaviours that created a particular result or feeling, so that the person listening can begin to appreciate how other people experience their behaviours.

### The role of the listener

The primary aim of the listener is to understand what the speaker is saying. By a process of listening, questioning or clarifying, you should aim to:



- Understand what the situations or problems really are, e.g. if the speaker is not happy with their job, identify some of the causes of that. If they want a closer relationship with their step-children, find out the driving factors behind that, what is currently in the way, etc.
- Understand how they feel about the situations and be able to tell them afterwards, e.g. 'I think this situation is frustrating you and also perhaps upsetting you a little'.
- Be able to fill in gaps in the conversation, i.e. what wasn't said. For example, 'I think maybe you're wondering how your step-children's mother might react'.

### Ground rules for the listener

During the conversation, however, *do not*:

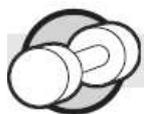
- Attempt to give the speaker ideas, solutions or suggestions relating to the situations they are discussing.
- Refer to or discuss any of your own similar circumstances, experiences or feelings.
- Attempt to control the direction or content of the conversation.
- Seek to look good or impress the other person in any way, e.g. by asking 'clever' questions, by offering impressive facts or information, etc.

### Exercise summary

This exercise causes us to become aware of how much we are programmed to want to put 'something of ourselves' into a conversation with another person. We might do this by solving their problems for them, showing them how much we know about what they're talking about, or even taking over the conversation completely. The exercise is great for developing a different listening perspective. The listener's only motive is to really understand and relate to the other person, nothing else. Once this way of listening has been experienced, the listener can then practise this again and again, whenever they like. The other person doesn't have to know what they're doing, unless the listener wants feedback. At some point during their practices, the listener is likely to experience a greater sense of who the speaker is, how they feel, including those thoughts or feelings that aren't actually spoken. That's deep listening!

## SKILL THREE – USING INTUITION

Intuition is simply an access to our brain's potential to provide guidance and information free from the confines of our limited conscious mind. Through intuition, we are able to access vast stores of experience, knowledge and wisdom in a way that sometimes defies logic. Intuition is a way our brain has of communicating with our conscious mind and uses subtle means such as thoughts, feelings, sensations, imagery, sounds – or various combinations of those. Intuition seems to be a function of both our brain and our body – think of how we talk about 'gut feelings', or 'having a feeling about something'. Intuition seems to potentially involve any part of our body, as it attempts to guide and direct our thoughts. Intuition incorporates the brain's ability to understand communication from situations or people by going beyond the signals we normally respond to.



### An exercise: Using your own intuition

Choose your next meal according to what your intuition is telling you. If you're in a restaurant, read down the list of options and ask yourself 'What's the best choice I could make here?' Settle into the question peacefully, and make sure you're relaxed in order to hear, feel or see the response. If you're relaxed, your breathing will be slightly slower, comfortable and often you'll find yourself breathing from your stomach or mid-section. This



way of choosing food can actually be a good strategy for anyone wanting to eat more healthily or lose weight. Maintaining a relaxed state will give you access to your own wisdom. When your choice is based on this wisdom, you'll often find yourself choosing something that is a good choice for you and your body. Be warned, you may end up eating something unusual! If our intuition draws upon our latent wisdom and knowledge, then of course we benefit from increasing that knowledge. Continual learning and self-development will help a coach stay both effective and fresh. So, whether you learn by reading, attending courses or seminars, debating with others, seeking feedback, listening to tapes, keeping a diary, studying others, or a combination of all those – I encourage you to remain both focused and committed to increasing your own knowledge and skill.

## SKILL FOUR – ASKING QUESTIONS

The ability to ask good questions consistently is uncommon enough to seem like a rare talent. It's actually a skill that can be developed, with concentration and practice. In coaching, a beautifully timed, perfectly worded question can remove barriers, unlock hidden information, and bring to the surface potentially life-changing insights. In other words, to be a great coach you need to be able to ask great questions. What does a great question look like or sound like? Well, it will have the following characteristics:

- It is simple.
- It has a purpose.
- It will be influencing without being controlling.

The best question is one that the other partner is willing to answer because it's both simple to understand and inoffensive in its tone. In addition, if the question is right, it will surface the information you both need to increase progress within the conversation. Suitable questions might include:

- 'Can you perhaps say a little more about the importance to you of earning money?' This is a gentle, respectful question, maybe a little general, but it's likely to create progress.
- 'What is it about earning more money that's important to you?' This is more direct, and relies on you having good rapport, and a fairly gentle tone of voice.
- 'So money's important – can you tell me a bit more about that?' A little more casual, a little less direct and still might easily hit the mark. If it doesn't, you can be sure it's going to get you closer.

Any question is given further meaning by the quality of your voice when you ask it. Questions may be made clearer, colder, more supportive or more aggressive simply by the tone, warmth and speed of your voice.



### **An exercise: Use your voice**

Using the question 'So what was important about that?' repeat it three different times, changing the quality of your voice each time, using the following characteristics:

- With a cruel sneer.
- With sarcasm (and end with a sigh!).
- With genuine curiosity, as though the answer is important to you.

You will notice that a great question can be completely wrecked by the wrong tonality. Also, use great tonality with a potentially risky or abrupt question and you're more likely to get a good response.



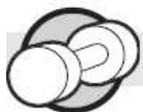
## SKILL FIVE – GIVING SUPPORTIVE FEEDBACK

### Feedback as a way of learning

Effective feedback can accelerate a survivor's learning, inspire them, motivate them, help them feel valued and literally catapult them into action. So it's important that a coach learns to deliver feedback that is:

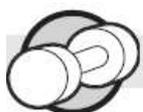
- Given with a positive intention.
- Based on fact or behaviour.
- Constructive and beneficial.

The term 'feedback' means literally to feed information back to someone. This information relates to the person receiving the feedback and provides data from which they can assess their performance or experiences. It can range from a general comment such as 'That was great/lousy' to more specific assessments of performance such as 'you've got your hand an inch too high'.



#### An exercise: Who's being objective?

This exercise is a bit of fun with a twist. You'll need your favourite newspaper or magazine and a piece of paper and a pen. Choose a fairly brief article you're interested in reading. Read the article once, so that you understand what's in it. Now, divide your paper into two columns, one headed 'objective' and the other 'subjective'. Using the columns, separate the objective facts in the article from the subjective or opinion-based statements. When you've finished, notice what and how much is in each column. What does that say about your preferred reading material?



#### An exercise: Get some feedback

A great way to learn about giving feedback is for you to experience receiving some. That way you can learn about what works and what does not work, plus how it actually feels to be focused on in this way. To do the exercise, choose someone who knows you well (who you like and trust). As a word of caution, the intention of this exercise is for you to experience feedback. There can be no guarantees that you'll like what you hear, or agree with what's said. Remember, to give supportive feedback yourself you need to know what works and what doesn't.

#### Part one – set-up

You're going to ask this person for some feedback on a particular topic that you feel comfortable discussing, for example:

**Q:** *What kind of manager am I?*

**Q:** *What kind of parent am I?*

**Q:** *How am I at giving presentations/running meetings, etc.?*

Or any other area that you're interested in getting better at. If you're interested in a stretch, ask them to think about how they experience you generally, as a person.

#### Part two – the questions

Ask them to consider the following three questions, with regard to the topic or area you've requested feedback on:

*Q: What am I good at? /What do I do well?/What are my strengths, etc.?*

*Q: What am I not so good at?*

*Q: What could I do differently to improve?*

*Q: When your partner has answers for each section, continue to part three.*

### **Part three – have a feedback conversation**

Ask your partner to give you their responses to each question in turn. Make sure that you understand each response, and use questions to clarify if necessary, e.g. 'Can you tell me a little more about that?' or 'Can you think of an example?' Receive all feedback graciously, maturely, and don't contradict the other person's view – after all, it's just their view. If they say something that you don't like or disagree with, simply find out a little more about what may have caused this view. When your partner has finished, thank them.

### **Part four – take the learning**

Now, on your own, sit down with a piece of paper and write answers/notes to the following questions:

*Q: What did I learn about myself from that conversation?*

*Q: What will I do differently as a result of that conversation?*

*Q: What was not good about that conversation?*

*Q: What am I going to do about that?*

*Q: What was good about the way they gave me feedback?*

*Q: What didn't work about the way they gave me feedback?*

*Q: What principles will I focus on when giving feedback now?*

Think also about how the conversation was useful to you generally. What was it like seeing yourself through the eyes of the other person?

### **Part five – share the learning (optional)**

If you feel it is appropriate and useful, share your answers to the above questions with your partner. Ask them first if they'd like to hear them, as a way of sharing your learning. Remember, you'll now be in position of giving feedback yourself, so please employ all your learning and care!

**Summary:** The following skills are core to coaching, whether that's within a formal coaching session, or simply as a style of behaviour or management:

- Building rapport or relationship.
- Different levels of listening.
- Using intuition.
- Asking questions.
- Giving supportive feedback.

These skills must be developed constantly, in order to keep them fresh and available. All these skills are found in everyday situations and you will already have a level of competence with each one. By exploring and practising aspects within each skill, we can develop our existing knowledge and ability, beyond what is normally found in an individual. When we are able to bring these skills together, coaching conversations flow naturally and easily.

**Recommended: Social workers can use the exercises above for self work or working in pairs. After improvement of coaching skills they can try to implement in practice. Everyone can organize her/his coaching path in a way that makes her/him comfortable with. Below you can find the guiding principles you can rely on.**

**The coaching path: guiding principles**

Coaching session with a survivor can come through the following stages: *Establish conversation; Identify conversation; Identify topic and goal; Surface understanding; Shape conclusions and Completion*



Over time you'll develop your own routines, habits and process to suit the way you work. For example, you may always begin by revisiting the overall assignment objectives from your very first session. Or you may choose to summarize briefly the conversation along with the actions. You might set up the whole schedule of sessions before you've actually started the coaching session.