

The Importance of Body Language

When Communicating with Patients



**Be a
Recovery
Advocate!**

Did You Know

For better or worse, the nonverbal cues you send during your interactions with others help people judge your character and intent. Making eye contact, maintaining good posture, and smiling are just some of the ways we can control how others see us.



Knowledge Domain

Body language is defined as non-verbal messages communicated through the sender's body movements, facial expressions, tone of voice, volume, and more. In short, everything you're doing with your body, consciously or subconsciously, in the presence of another person is considered communication.

Recommended Group Activity

This activity's focus is to discuss the importance of body language when treating people with a substance use disorder. Play charades! Practice expressing yourself without speaking to a partner and have your partner discuss how your body language could be interpreted.

- Speak loudly and clearly – use your voice for emphasis.
- Avoid speaking in monotone or trailing off at the end of your sentences.
- Maintain an “open” body posture. Don't cross your arms or clasp your hands, and make sure you're facing the other person.
- Don't fidget; put down pens and papers.
- Make sure your facial expression matches your words.
- Smile when appropriate.
- Try not to stare directly at the other person. Instead, move your gaze.
- Don't look over the person's head.

To Learn More

How Body Language Impacts Physician-Patient Relationships

<http://bit.ly/SUDstigma6>

What is Your Body Language Saying to Patients?

<http://bit.ly/2N80ErI>