

## Masterclass objectives

**On completion of the How you connect masterclass coaches will:**

* understand common methods of communication and how to use them
* recognise the impact of different communication methods on the experience of your participants.

## Reflective workbook purpose

This workbook provides an opportunity to extend the information from within the How you connect masterclass. The questions and activities within this workbook are designed to:

* provide an opportunity to apply the knowledge within the masterclass to your own coaching context.
* provide direction on how to communicate with your participants.

## How to use this workbook

To get the most from this masterclass and develop your ability to reflect on your understanding and approach to communication, we recommend the following:

* Complete the course on a computer or device with a larger display.
* Download the course workbook from the resources section.
* Display the course and the reflective workbook document in side-by-side browser windows as you complete your learning.

In the online content you will notice a workbook activity icon (see left). This indicates a question or activity linked to this section of the workbook. Locate the corresponding question or activity in the workbook and complete before progressing. Once you complete the questions or activities, head back to the online content to progress through the masterclass.

At the end of the workbook, you can reflect on what you have learned about effective communication to guide your future interactions with your participants. Additional templates for reflections are also provided (see Resources tile).

## What you know

### Adapting your communication

Even when you think you’ve figured out the most effective way and time to communicate with your participants, there are still situations that may require you to adapt to be as effective as possible. Some situations a coach may be presented with can include:

* Participant confidence when communicating with others
* cultural considerations and requirements
* Participants who may need more attention
* different approaches to communication (e.g. physical impairment, different first languages).

To ensure you can communicate effectively with everyone you could:

* find out how your participants prefer to receive communication
* spend time learning about different social, cultural and behavioural situations and how communication can be adapted in these situations
* have participants, parents, guardians or carers explain an activity or pass on information if you are having trouble communicating with a participant.

**Consider your coaching environment. What situations might you face when communicating with your participants?**

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### How might you adapt to these situations?

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## What you do

### Questioning

Asking your participants questions is one of the most impactful ways you can connect with them. There are many things you might use questions for, such as:

* to make participants more aware of what they are doing and why (e.g. What happens to your shoulders as you take off over the hurdle?)
* to promote problem-solving and decision-making (e.g. How could you create more space for your teammates to receive the ball?)
* to make a link between performance at training and match-day (e.g. Where might this happen during the game on Saturday?)
* to make sure participants understand what you’ve asked of them (e.g. Can you remind everyone what the rules of this activity are?)

**Create a list of questions you could ask your participants during a session. Outline when you would ask them and why.**

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### Feedback

Feedback is another important way to communicate with your participants. Feedback is simply the information a participant receives from you, other participants, or sometimes technology, about something they have done. Participants use this information to help improve their performance.

In most sporting environments, participants receive feedback about a variety of things, such as:

* a skill or task they have completed
* how they work with teammates and coaches
* their attitude and engagement.

**Create a list of feedback you could provide to your participants during a session. Include the type of feedback, when you would provide it and why.**

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### Instructions

A lot of information you pass onto your participants is in the form of instructions. These instructions provide direction and play an important role in the way a session is completed. Often, coaches don’t always consider how these instructions can impact their participants.

**Create a list of instructions that you could provide to your participants during a session, the type of instruction it is, when you would provide it and why.**

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### Silent observation

One of the most impactful ways a coach connects with their participants is by remaining silent. Whether they realise it or not, every coach uses this form of communication at some point during a session. It's important to understand that effective silent observation is not just about remaining quiet and not interacting with participants. It is an opportunity to gather information about your participants.

**Describe how you use silent observation in your coaching to help your participants develop.**

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**Create a list of the most common times during a session you might use silent observation and why.**

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## What others think

Talk to your participants about how they like information to be presented. This will improve your communication and help you connect with your participants. Finding out what your participants experienced will help direct your future communication with them to make sure that the way you connect with them will benefit their development as well as the experience they have.

**Create a list of questions you could ask your participants, to find out what they thought of your communication during the session.**

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## What you think

Up to this point you have:

* identified what challenges might exist when communicating
* recognised the various ways of communicating with participants
* identified what information you might seek to develop your communication.

Knowing this information helps to better understand what the most effective method of communication for a given context is and how best to use it. Numerous examples of the different ways a coach can communicate have been provided to highlight how and when to use each.

Before heading into your next session and trying to apply the knowledge you have gained from this masterclass about communicating with your participants, it is important that you are able to recognise the different communication methods so that you are aware of what this looks and sounds like in a real-world scenario. In the next activity, use this knowledge to identify the different types of communication Anula uses and suggest what impact this might have on her participants.

**Watch the video that appears in the masterclass and use the space below to identify:**

* what is being communicated
* how it is being communicated
* when the communication is taking place
* why Anula is communicating
* how her athletes responded.

There will be examples of numerous methods of communication in the video so take as long as you need to identify as many different types of communication that Anula uses. You can pause and rewind the video as much as you need. Don’t feel limited by the space provided in the text boxes below. They will expand as you type.

### What is Anula communicating?

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### How is Anula communicating?

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### When is Anula communicating?

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### Why is Anula communicating?

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### How did her athletes respond to her coaching?

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A template using these questions is available in the resources section of the masterclass that you can download at any time for you to use in the future as you continue to reflect on your coaching.

## Moving forward

### What have you learned?

Before you complete the How you connect masterclass, take some time to reflect on what you have learned. In addition to reflecting on what you learned about communication, you may also want to consider:

* Are there new situations that you need to consider and adapt to when communicating with your participants?
* How might your communication change depending on the environment?
* How are you going to adapt how and when you communicate with your participants?

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### Implementing your knowledge

The next step is taking the lists of questions, feedback, instructions and silent observations and applying them to your future sessions. Include these in your next session plan so you know what you will communicate, when and why. Once you have created your session plan, you need to reflect on the effectiveness of your communication. You can do this in a number of ways, for example:

* Reflecting throughout the session on how you are communicating and taking notes in a journal or into your phone.
* Have someone (e.g. another coach, parent, participants) provide feedback to you during and/or after the session about your communication.
* Record yourself during the session (ensure you have permission to do so\*) and view the footage after the session.

Regardless of how you obtain the information, think about the following during your reflection:

* how successful you were at implementing the communication you planned
* the impact different methods of communication had on your participants
* how often you used various methods of communication and when they occurred
* if you need to change how you communicate the next time you coach.

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Note regarding any filming or use of video: Consider and abide by all rules your club, association and organisation has regarding filming and using video during sessions, especially for people under 18 years of age. You may need to obtain written and/or verbal informed consent.

By recognising the impact that different methods of communication can have on your participants’ experience, you can continue to develop your communication skills and gain a better understanding of what your participants need and what motivates them.

# Additional resources

The Australian Sports Commission Community Coach Development – <https://www.ausport.gov.au/coaching/community/support-for-sports/coach-development>

Coach observation tool – <https://www.ausport.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0010/1104121/How-you-connect-Communication-observation-tool.docx>

Session plan template –- <https://www.ausport.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0009/1104120/How-you-connect-Session-plan-template.dotx>