

## > TIP SHEET

### IMPROVING EMPATHY

- Always be an active listener and a sympathetic talker. Importantly, never talk more than the person you are interviewing.
- Try to place yourself in the position of the person you are talking to even if you have little in common with him or her and disagree with his or her lifestyle, beliefs, and opinions.
- Engage your 'presence of mind' and disengage your own views so that you can look, listen, and learn.
- Consider your own body language and dress when working in the field or in areas where it is important you blend in emotionally, intellectually, and physically. People feel more comfortable when you mirror their postures or in some way reflect their dress sense, as well as adhering to their social codes. As a forecaster, it is always important to blend in.
- When a person uses particular words and phrases, repeat these words back to him or her later in your conversation — this subconsciously signals that you have been listening to him or her and, more importantly, that you value his or her ideas enough to remember them.
- If in doubt when speaking to a person and asking him or her to 'tell you more about his/her thoughts' or 'to explain his/her views in more depth', the trick is to offer the person a non-confrontational way in which to introduce ideas or thoughts that may be different from yours, and to do so in a forum of openness and active encouragement.
- Finally, you need to accept that people are different and that attempting to change someone, or to harangue him or her over his or her views, isn't the best way to win that person over. However, by introducing words, phrases, and ideas into your conversation that suggest you have been in part won over by him or her, or which indicate you have been listening in a receptive and fair manner, will inevitably keep that person open to future conversations.