



1 Extended Guide to Introductory Forum

RATIONALE

Our online discussions are firstly a great place to 'meet' and get to know a little about each other, so we look forward to meeting you all through your introductory posts. Secondly, online discussions allow each person to share their different perspectives, which is often helpful for others in the group. Thirdly, the discussion tasks we've set will encourage you think beyond what you understand now, towards new understandings.

To support you in this process, we have developed some **communicative strategies** or **protocols** as online discussions can often be tricky. We will provide a few at a time and build on these as the subject progresses.

In the first forum introducing yourself is a good opportunity to tell us a bit about your background and experience – you could also upload a photo (in your Profile) so we can all 'see' each other.

We also ask that you read and respond to others because in online discussion this is how we demonstrate '**listening**' and **being 'listened to'** (this can help prevent feeling like an 'outsider' to the group).

When responding to others it is good to:

1. **address** the person (or persons) by **naming** them (e.g. 'Hi Steven'; 'Nice to meet you Ruth and Susan')
2. **acknowledge** what they have said in some way, such as by **complimenting** (e.g. 'you've made a great point about xxx ...' 'I admire you for persevering with xxx ...' 'It was so good to read about your experiences in xxx ...'); or **supporting / agreeing with** something they have mentioned (e.g. 'I understand where you're coming from because xxx ...' 'I had a very similar experience to yours when I was in xxx ...' 'Like you, I love my job!' 'I agree with what you said about xxx ...' 'I think what you mentioned is right, because xxx ...' 'I agree ...' 'That's true ...') etc.

You may also want to **initiate ideas**, and in the beginning stage of getting to know each other it may be good to commence with a *softener*, for example, 'I think ...' 'In my opinion ...'



ORGANISING THE DISCUSSION POSTS

When responding to someone, please click on 'Reply' so that we can group topics together. This also helps us all to see the discussion as a whole (rather than having to open separate posts). If you want to start a different topic choose a subject heading which makes it clear to others what your post is about.

If you require specific help using or accessing [INSERT LMS], support is available both in and after hours on [INSERT CONTACT DETAILS].