

Lesson:
Ways to Communicate

Length of lesson:
30 Minutes

Materials:

- Paper
- Pens and pencils

Discussion Summary:

Communication is what we do to give and get understanding; it is the process of sending and receiving messages. Successful communication occurs when there is understanding. Communication can be verbal, using oral language to convey a message, or non-verbal, including facial expressions, body language, text or written based language. Sometimes a message's original meaning gets lost in the translation between thought and the act of communicating it. Teaching young people how to communicate effectively helps them maintain healthy relationships, resolve conflicts peacefully, excel in school, and eventually get and keep jobs.

Discussion Questions:

- **What are some ways humans communicate?**
- **In what aspects of life can good communication be beneficial?**

1. Begin by playing the game

“Telephone.”(Instructions for this game can also be found in the Ice Breaker Module) Have participants sit in a circle. Ask one participant to think of a phrase or sentence. Direct them to whisper it in the ear of the person sitting next to them. Each participant whispers what they think they heard to the next participant next to them. The last participant says the phrase or sentence out loud. Ask the first participant if that was their phrase. Did anything change? Did the message get lost or changed in translation? This is an example of verbal communication.

2. Now play the game “Charades.”

Have participants get up one at a time to act out a phrase or sentence without using any words or sounds while the others guess the phrase or sentence. Ask participants to explain what they did to communicate their message when they were unable to use words (ex: facial expressions, body language, gestures). Were others able to guess the

phrase or sentence? Was the message delivered effectively? This is an example of non-verbal communication. Explain that we all communicate all day long, whether or not we are using words. Explain that others pick up messages from our facial expressions, body language, gestures, and general demeanor.

3. Have partners get in pairs. Direct them to communicate “hello” to their partner three different ways. If they need help, remind them that they can use verbal words, written text, their body or a gesture, or even do something creative.

- 4.** Next have them communicate a feeling to their partner. Give examples of feelings: sad, angry, happy, excited, jealous, confused, or worried. The other partner will guess what feeling they are portraying. For example if their feeling was “sad” they could say or write “I feel sad”, make a facial expression, or show with their body how they feel.
- 5.** Give examples from “telephone” and “charades” to demonstrate that what you want to communicate is not always what others understand. Explain this is how rumors and gossip spread: someone tells someone a secret and it gets passed on and it gets changed and distorted along the way, just as the message did in “telephone.”
- 6.** Remind participants that being clear and concise in their verbal and non-verbal communication is an important life skill that needs to be practiced.
- 7.** Finish by using non-verbal communication to ask participants to take out their journals or that you’ll see them later or that you love them! Have participants guess your message and then do the action.

