

Short & Snappy

Team Building and Communication

Information to Share (Spend 10 minutes on this section.)

Objective

This is a great workshop to do with your troop or with your CLT! It gets individuals thinking about effective communication and works on creative ways to improve communication skills.

Length

20 minutes

Materials Needed

Positive attitudes; thinking caps

For Activities: string/rope; pens/crayons/markers; blank paper; old calendars

The most important aspect to achieving success as a team is good communication. Almost any conflict can be traced back to poor communication. Here are some fun facts about communication that are important to keep in mind:

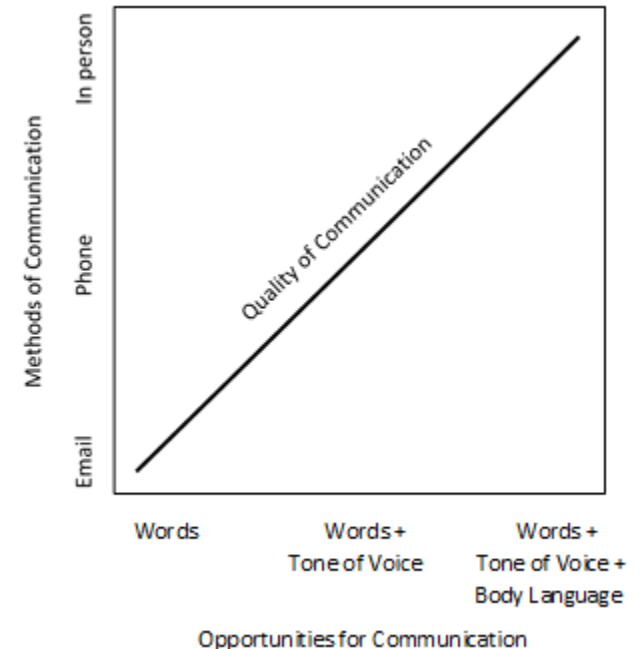
- Good communication is a consistent and conscious effort → if you stop consciously prioritizing it, it will decrease in quality.
- There are two sides to communication → the giving side, and the receiving side.
 - What the giving side intends to give is not always what is received.
- Never assume there is a pre-existing or unsaid understanding.
- If you have been involved in communication, you are responsible its quality → whether you were receiving or giving.
- There is so much more involved in communication than words. What else is involved in communication?
 - (tone, body language, silence, what is seen, what is heard, what isn't heard)

Quality and Effectiveness:

- The more of types of communication experienced at a time, the less opportunity there is for misunderstanding (because you have multiple ways to express yourself)
 - Communication Diagram (draw on the board or show a poster)
- In person, you have the opportunity to communicate through multiple mediums: verbal language, body language, emotional expression, tone of voice, etc.
- The further your communication moves away from “in-person,” the more opportunity there is for misunderstanding.
- For example, if you have to discuss a difficult issue, in person, you have the opportunity to show empathy through body language and tone of voice; whereas, through email, you must attempt to explain the situation with words alone. There is much more opportunity to be misunderstood without the ability to use tone of voice and body language.

Obstacles to achieving good communication:

- Negative past experiences
- Prejudice
 - These lead to predetermined ideas that can cloud communication
 - Makes people defensive
 - Creates predisposed ideas



Activity – Communication Games (Spend 10 minutes on this section.)

Pick 2 (or more if there is time) of the games below to play:

- Rope Shapes:
 - o Break into groups of 6-8.
 - o Each group gets a long rope/string that is tied together at the ends (making one large circle).
 - o In your groups, stand in a circle facing in, and take hold of the string with both hands.
 - o Everyone closes their eyes, and attempts to make their circle into a shape (announced by the game leader).
 - o When groups think they have made their shape, they may open their eyes and see if they achieved their goal.
 - o Rules: you must hold on to the string with both hands. You may not let go. You may slide your hands back and forth down the string, but may never cross past another hand.
 - o Possible shapes: square, rectangle, diamond, circle, oval, heart, star, parallelogram, etc.
- Human Knot:
 - o Break into groups of 5-8.
 - o Each group stands in a close circle facing in and closes their eyes.
 - o Everyone must reach out and take the hand of someone else in the circle.
 - o Everyone may then open their eyes, and check that they are not holding the same person with both hands.
 - o Groups are now knotted up and must attempt to untangle (into a circle) without letting go.
- Body Spelling:
 - o Break into groups of 5-6.
 - o The leader announces a word, and teams must attempt to spell the word with their bodies (this is very challenging if the number of letters is different than the number of people in the group).
 - o The first team to spell each word wins the round.
 - o Do as many rounds (different words) as you wish.
 - o Possible words: PIZZA; SCHOOL; TIME; FUN; DAISY; GIRL; COOKIE; BADGE; PATCH; PIN; LEAD; etc.
- See, Run, Do:
 - o Materials needed: blank paper, pens/pencils/markers/crayons, photos or posters (old calendars work well)
 - o Break up into teams of 5-6
 - o Each team must choose one “Seer” and one “Runner.” The rest of the team are “Doers.”
 - o The Seer from each team gets to come up and see the picture or poster held by the game leader.
 - o The Runner from each team may then come up and ask their Seer what is on the poster (the Runner may not see the picture/poster). Then they “run” back to their team and tell them what the picture/poster looks like. The Seer stays separated from their team, and may only communicate with their team’s runner.
 - o The Doers then attempt to draw the picture/poster on their paper. (The Runner MAY NOT draw).
 - o The team with the closest picture wins the round. Play as many rounds as you have time/pictures for.

Ending – What Does It Mean?? (Spend 5 minutes on this section.)

1. Discuss what challenges and frustrations were experienced during each of the games and how those challenges were overcome.
2. Ask people to share examples of when and how these concepts could be applied to real-life situations.