

4. Listen Hear!!

JUST THE FACTS: This quick activity is designed to get participants to start thinking about the importance of two-way communication.

Time 15 - 20 minutes


Materials • One sheet of paper (8-1/2 x 11) for each participant
• One sheet of paper for the facilitator

Directions After giving each participant one sheet of paper, offer the following directions, pausing after each instruction to give the group time to comply (complete the activity yourself using your own sheet of paper).

1. Pick up your sheet of paper and hold it in front of you. Close your eyes and listen carefully to my directions. The rules are: (1) no peeking and (2) no questions.
2. The first thing I want you to do is to fold your sheet of paper in half. (Pause)
3. Now, tear off the upper right hand corner. (Pause)
4. Fold the paper in half again and tear off the upper left hand corner of the sheet. (Pause)
5. Fold it in half again. (Pause)
6. Now tear off the lower right-hand corner of the sheet. (Pause)

After all tearing is complete, say: Now, open your eyes and unfold your paper. If I did a good job of communicating and you did a





good job of listening, all of our sheets should look exactly the same!

Hold your sheet up for everyone to see. Ask participants to compare their sheets. Ask why no one's paper matched yours exactly? You will probably get responses such as, "You didn't let us ask any questions!" or "The way you gave us directions wasn't clear!"


Conclusion

Part of the communication process (and being a good communicator) is recognizing that people may need to receive information in different ways in order to be successful. If the goal of this activity was really to have everyone's snowflakes look exactly the same, what changes could have been made to the directions?

Discuss the need for effective two-way communication at home, at work, and in the community with friends. Ask the group to work together or in smaller groups to create a definition of "Good Communication" by thinking about what good communication looks like. Be sure the list includes the responsibilities of being a good communicator and a good listener.

Journaling Activity Think of a time when you could have been a better communicator or a better listener. Describe the situation. What happened? What is more important – communicating in a way that is easy for you or communicating in a way so that others can understand you? Is there a difference? Explain.





Extension Activity Talk about the different TV shows participants watch. Discuss the differences in the way people communicate (or don't communicate) with each other – and how miscommunication has caused problems and conflict for the show's characters. Select a conflict from a recent TV episode and have participants describe, discuss, or act out how the problem was solved/portrayed in that scene.

Consider: What was the conflict? What strategies did the characters use to solve the problem? Were they effective strategies for solving the problem solving peacefully? If not, what strategies might the characters have used instead? Discuss the effect young people think the media has on how people handle their problems?

Finally, create a TV public service announcement that promotes solving conflicts in peaceful ways.

*You may also wish to check with your local Department of Juvenile Services or other social services agency and find out about conflict mediation specialists in your area. Invite them in to talk with the group about conflict – and ways to handle unhealthy situations before they get out of control.

