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# SESSION 4

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## Objectives:

- To identify the various elements of communication.
- To recognize the elements of communication in their own behavior.
- To understand the ways in which these elements shape communication.

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## Session Outline:

- **Updating**
- **Communication**
- **Say What You Mean**
- **Eye Contact**
- **Body Language**
- **Gestures**
- **Facial Expressions**
  - Exercise: Facial Expressions
- **Voice**
- **Break Or Split Session Option**
  - Car Wash for Split Session
  - Selfwork for Split Session
  - Reentry for Split Session
- **Timing**
- **Listening**
  - Exercise: Whispering
- **Preparing to Communicate**
  - Exercise: 3 Communications
- **Relaxation**
- Handouts:
  - Letter to Parents
  - Communication
- Materials:
  - Cards and container if needed for Facial Expressions Exercise.
  - Flip chart or chalk board

## Updating

What is the nicest thing that happened to you last week?

How did you do with your positive-override statements?

Did anything change or feel different?

We've spent some time on how you communicate with yourself, now we're going to talk about communication with others.

## Communication

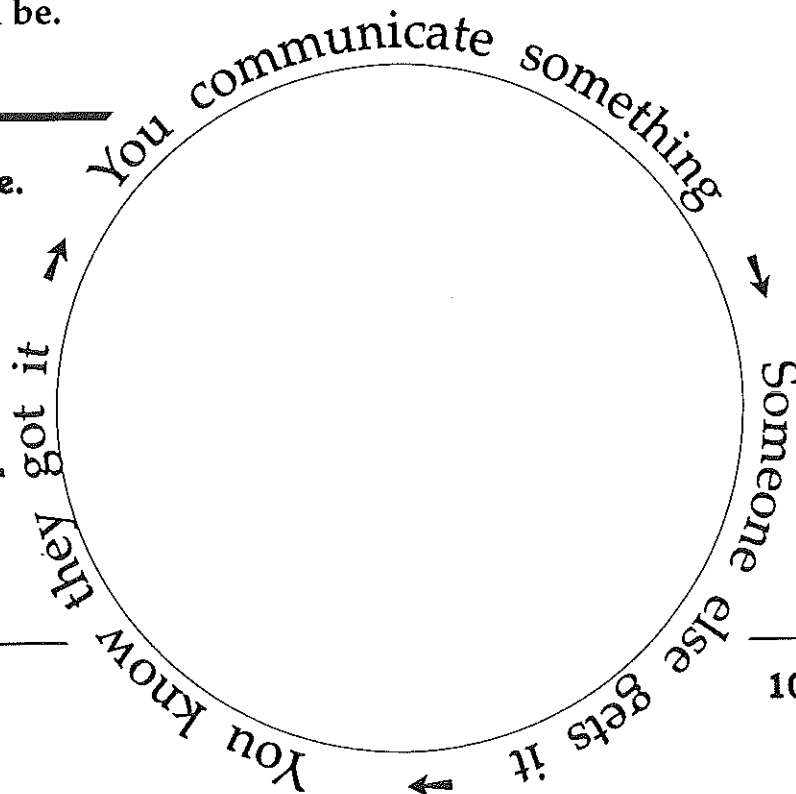
What is communication?

Discuss.

Much of what we communicate is unconscious; we don't know we're doing it. So the more you know about what and how you communicate, the more choices you have and the more effective you can be.

### Flip Chart 16

Communication is a full circle.



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If you say something that the other person can't or doesn't hear, you did not communicate. Even if they heard and understood you, if you aren't certain of that, then you can't be certain you communicated fully.

Who can tell me some of the things that are part of communication or ways to communicate?

After you get their ideas, uncover flip chart.

### **Flip Chart 17**

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#### **Communication**

- Say what you mean
  - Eye contact
  - Body language
  - Gestures
  - Facial expressions
  - Voice tone
  - Timing
  - Listening
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Let's look at each of these in more detail so you understand how they work together to make up communication.

## Say What You Mean

The first thing on the list means that you have to be clear about what you're saying in order to be understood.

You need to say what you want to say.

- What if you have a relative who always adjusts or fusses with your clothes. If you say, "Don't," this can lead to the question, "Don't what?" Whereas, "Please don't fuss with my clothes; I don't like it," leaves very little room for question.

People can't read your mind, so you need to say what you mean.

- What if you want to go to a friend's house and you say to your mother (or someone else) "Are you going anywhere this afternoon?" How does this create confusion? Is this direct communication?

## Eye Contact

Why is eye contact important?

How does someone know who you are talking to?

Ask someone in the group the next question without eye contact.

If I say, "Would you get me that chair over there?" How do you know who I was speaking to?

Ask the same question using eye contact.

If there are cultural differences which should come into play in this discussion, please be appropriate to those differences.

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Eye contact effectively says, "I mean YOU."

So, again, how do you know if someone is listening to you?

If someone is looking at you, you have a sense that they will hear what you have to say.

## **Body Language**

Do we also communicate with our bodies?

Who can give some examples of how we might speak with our bodies?

Communication is more powerful if what we say with our words is matched by what we say with our bodies.

► What if I were standing beside you with my arm around your shoulders and you say, "I don't want your arm around me," but you don't move. Do you think I might think you don't mean it?

If, on the other hand, you look at me and say "I'm not comfortable with your arm there," and move away from me. Is that more clear?

► What if someone is pushing you around and you say, without looking at them or moving away, "Quit it." Is that an unclear communication?

What about posture? Is that a part of body language? Does it communicate how you feel about what you are saying?

▶ Demonstrate saying this sentence with different body postures.

- "I'm fine." (slouching)
- "I'm fine." (doubled over)
- "I'm fine." (straight & tall)

Give each person in the group a chance to try this one or the next one so they can experience the importance of body language.

How you move your body says things about what you feel.

▶ How might your movements change the meaning of this sentence?

- "I want to go home now." (moving toward door)
- "I want to go home now." (sitting still — not moving)

How close you are to someone or how far away from them you stay influences the message that is communicated. This can be called your comfort zone.

Each of us has a comfort zone, a distance that we like to be away from people when talking.

▶ Demonstrate with a volunteer the feeling when someone is too close, infringing on his/her comfort zone.

Have the group experiment with this in pairs.

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Discuss how it feels to have someone invade their comfort zone.

Discuss how this is sometimes done to intimidate.

**How do people tell us that we're too close for their comfort zone?**

**What are the nonverbal clues people use to tell us we've invaded their comfort zone?**

## **Gestures**

**What is a gesture?**

**Gestures are body language that tell us something about how or what the person speaking to us feels.**

**What do you think the following gestures mean?**

➔ **Have one person come forward. Either whisper the gesture to them or have them pick written gestures from a container. When they demonstrate the gesture, have the group identify both the gesture and its meaning:**

- **arms folded across chest**
- **waving arms wildly**
- **rubbing hands together**
- **shaking fingers**
- **rubbing neck**
- **shrugging**



- twisting fingers

What other gestures have you noticed or used yourself?

## Facial Expressions

Have you ever heard the expression, "It's written all over your face?"

What do you suppose that means?

The expression on a person's face can tell you a lot about how a person feels when they are communicating with you.

At the same time, other people can read what is on your face.

This is important to know. People who don't know this often think they're being convincing when, in reality, everyone watching senses that what they are saying isn't true.

Let's see how good you are at reading the expressions on other people's faces.

## Exercise: Facial Expressions

Have a volunteer come forward. Either whisper the facial expression or have them pick written expressions from a container. Have the group identify the expression and the actual parts of the face that portrayed that expression.

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You should change the words depending on the age and comprehension level of the group.

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HINT: If the participants think of a time they felt this emotion, their bodies and facial expressions will naturally follow the emotion they are recreating inside.

happiness

fear

disgust

anger

boredom

worry

surprise

love

bewilderment

determination

confusion

pride

**For more practice, try reading faces when you're outside with your friends, in school or with your own family.**

## **Voice**

**We talked earlier about how important it is to say what you mean, to be clear about what you want to say. What are some ways that people use their voice to say or mean different things?**

intonation or sound of your voice (gruff, trembling)

pitch (high, low, shrieking)

volume (loud, soft)

the speed of speech

**Parents often talk about whining as a way of using the voice that they dislike.**

**► Ask group members to demonstrate the following statements changing their voices from:**

- whining,
- angry,
- unsure,
- questioning,
- clear statement of fact.

"I know you need me to help with my sister, but I need to do my homework."

► Have participants repeat the following sentence putting extra emphasis on a different word each time:

- Will you feed the dog?
- Will you feed the dog?
- Will you feed the dog?
- Will you feed the dog?

When someone says one thing and means another or they say one thing and something about their voice or body or face gives another message, that is called a mixed message.

Mixed messages often result in exchanges between people that sound something like this:

"Don't you speak to me in that tone of voice."

Response: "What did I say?"

Communication is a lot harder when you give mixed messages because people aren't sure what you mean.



Try the phrase "I'll be there in a minute." in the following three situations. See if they sound different.

**Situation 1:** Your friend is about to leave for a ball game and you have run back for your glove.

**Situation 2:** Your mother is trying to get you out of the house to go to the dentist and you want to change your shoes for the third time.

**Situation 3:** Your little brother asks you to come and help him get a toy out of the closet and you're talking to your best friend about something important that happened in school.

The words in each of these situations were the same.

Is what you communicated with your tone different?

## **Break Or Split Session Option**

### **Exercise for Split Session: Car Wash**

End the session with the car wash activity having participants pay particular attention to all the ways in which they express themselves when giving compliments, saying nice things, and having fun.

Upon completion of this have each person write in their Treasure Box, journal, or body tracing the thing they most liked hearing during the car wash.

Writing more than one is fine.



## **Selfwork for Split Session**

Select from Selfwork Activities 1, 2 and 3 found at the end of Session 4.

## **Reentry for Split Session**

Who would like to share some observations about your own communication style since last time? What did you observe about how other people listen?

Whether or not other people get what we're saying determines whether or not we have really communicated.

This session we're going to spend some more time on the elements of communication.

## **Timing**

Timing is critical to good communication. If people aren't prepared or ready to hear you, it won't matter how clearly you communicate.

In order to be sure someone is ready to listen, you have to get their attention first.

- ▶▶ What if your father (or someone else) was reading the paper after work and you had something important to tell him, something that happened during your day. How would you start?

Most participants will simply start talking.

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These role-plays are really fun and apply many of the techniques that the participants have been learning to date. Have fun with these, explore possibilities, and let them add their own role-plays as time permits. After you have done the first one, this is a set of role-plays where it might be appropriate to allow two participants to act out the role-play in front of the rest of the group.

Work with them to first get father's attention. Most participants are quite primitive and often frustrated in their efforts and will suggest things like ripping the paper out of his hands, etc. The way they know they have his attention is that he will stop reading and look at them.

Help them recognize that the way in which they ask for what they want — that is, the person's attention — affects how their communication will be received.

If they are inappropriate in how they get the person's attention, the person will focus on the inappropriate behavior, not on what is being said.

Have them look too at what outcome they want, what they want the person to do in response to the communication.

- ▶▶ **What if you've just been given the lead part in the school play. You want to tell your mother. When you come in, she is balancing the checkbook. What do you say and do?**
- ▶▶ **What if you've just had a fight with your best friend. You go to your grandmother's house after school and want to talk to her about what's happened. She is looking at a magazine and says she has a headache.**
- ▶▶ **What if you've learned about some cheating in your class. You begin to tell the teacher. She says, "If you're going to tattle, I don't want to hear about it." What do you do?**

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## Listening

The last part of communication is listening.

What does it mean to listen to someone?

Why is listening important?

Listening is a combination of using your voice, body language, and eye contact.

Listening is what makes communication work. If you're not listening, you won't know if the person you are talking to got your communication or not. You won't hear their questions, comments, requests for clarification, etc.

Communication means both people heard what was said and understood it.

### Exercise: Whispering

Play the whispering game in which you start a sentence, each person whispers it to the next person, and see how it comes out at the end. This is a good way to illustrate what can happen when communication is poor.

## Preparing to Communicate

When you're nervous about something you need to communicate to someone else, it's very easy to focus all

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your attention inside yourself and not hear what the other person says in response to you.

Think of something you need to communicate to someone but you feel unready or uneasy about it.

What feelings do you associate with this dilemma?

List.

Where in your body do you notice any physical feelings associated with this?

List.

One way to get ready to communicate is:

1. think about what you have to say ahead of time;
2. practice what you are going to communicate; and
3. remind yourself to focus outside of yourself, to concentrate on hearing the other person's reaction to what you've said.

Do any of you have something that you want to communicate to someone but you don't know what to say or how to say it? Who would like to practice with the group and prepare yourself?

Allow participants to think of communications and practice.

### **Exercise: 3 Communications**

Identify in your notebooks three people you need to communicate something to, positive or negative.



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# 4

Write down their name, the essence of what you want to communicate, the form in which you will communicate it (telephone, letter, in person), and then make a choice whether or not you will do so this coming week.

If you are going to communicate with them, make an agreement with yourself about when and how you will do this.

If you're really anxious or nervous about it, ask yourself, "What is the worst thing that could happen if I communicate this?"

Then ask yourself, "What is the best thing that could happen if I communicate this?"

Does this help you to make a choice?

Are there ways to communicate feelings and thoughts that you have without saying them directly to the person they are about?

Have any of you ever written a letter and not sent it?

What happened? Did it change the way you felt?

What does the saying "get it off your chest" mean?

Is writing a letter and not sending it a way to do this?

Are there other ways?

Perhaps just acknowledging what you want to say and choosing not to say it is appropriate.

Let's try an exercise which will allow you to think about what you might like to do.

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## **Relaxation**

Close your eyes, sit up in your chair but be comfortable. Take a slow deep breath.

Now, pay attention to your feet. Tighten the muscles in your feet. . . . , hold it. . . . , hold it. . . . , now let them relax. . . . , let them go.

Now, leaving your feet relaxed, pay attention to your legs. Tighten all the muscles in your legs. . . . , hold it. . . . , hold it. . . . , and then let them go. . . . , relax.

Now, bring your attention to your hands. Tighten them into a fist, hold it. . . . , hold it. . . . , now let them go. . . . , relax.

Keeping your hands and legs relaxed, tighten the muscles in your arms, hold it. . . . , hold it. . . . , now let them relax. . . . , feel all the tension letting go.

Now the muscles in your stomach. Tighten them. . . . , hold it. . . . , hold it. . . . , now let them relax completely.

Now your shoulders and neck. Tighten them, hold it. . . . , hold it. . . . , now relax. Feel all the tightness and tension flow away with every breath you take.

Finally, all the muscles in your face. Squinch them up tight, hold it. . . . , hold it. . . . , now let them all go, relax.

Now just pay attention to your breathing, feel how relaxed your body is. (pause for a minute)

Now, picture in your mind someone who you would like to say something to. Picture that person sitting or standing in front of you.

When you begin to speak with that person, he or she will simply listen, without moving or saying anything back. They are there only to hear what you have to say.

Begin speaking to that person now. Say whatever you have to say and see that person listening and understanding what you are saying.

Be silent for about 90 seconds.

Now finish up what you are saying.

Be silent for 20 seconds.

Now thank the person for listening carefully to what you had to say.

Be silent for 10 seconds.

Now, slowly begin to bring your attention into the room, move around a little bit and, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Would anyone like to share what that was like?

Allow time for sharing without comment or evaluation.

Did you feel that the person heard and understood what you communicated?

Would it be all right with you to be finished with that now or do you feel that you want or need to communicate with that person directly?

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If so, think about how you want them to respond and prepare yourself to ask for what you want.

For example, you might begin by saying something like, "I have something I want to tell you. I just want you to listen. You don't need to say anything (or make any suggestions), I just want you to hear what I have to say." Would that work for any of you?

Remind yourself now of what agreements you've made with yourself for the coming week.

## **Session 4 — Selfwork Activities**

1. Be aware of how you communicate with others including your body language, voice, facial expressions, timing, and what you say.
2. Be aware of how you can tell when other people are paying attention to you. Are there times when they stop paying attention in the middle of what you are saying? What do you do?
3. Choose another thought-switch (may be the same one again) to work on this week. Really narrow in on a particular repetitive thing you say about yourself that you can begin to change.
4. Practice being more effective in communicating with people — in ways that work — what you like, don't like, want, and don't want.
5. Keep any agreements you made about communicating this week.

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Dear Parents,

We've been discussing communication. It is one of the most complicated things we do, but it is the only way to let others know what we think and feel, and the only way to get things done with the people in our lives.

Two very important elements of communication are *effectiveness* and *appropriateness*. We stress both.

Communication is made up of many different parts. The more of these we can put together and make work for us, the more effective we will be in getting people to listen and respect our wishes. The better children are at communicating, the more they will be able to take care of themselves.

The parts of communication we discussed include:

- saying what you mean;
- tone of voice;
- making eye contact;
- timing;
- body language;
- listening;
- gestures; and
- facial expressions.

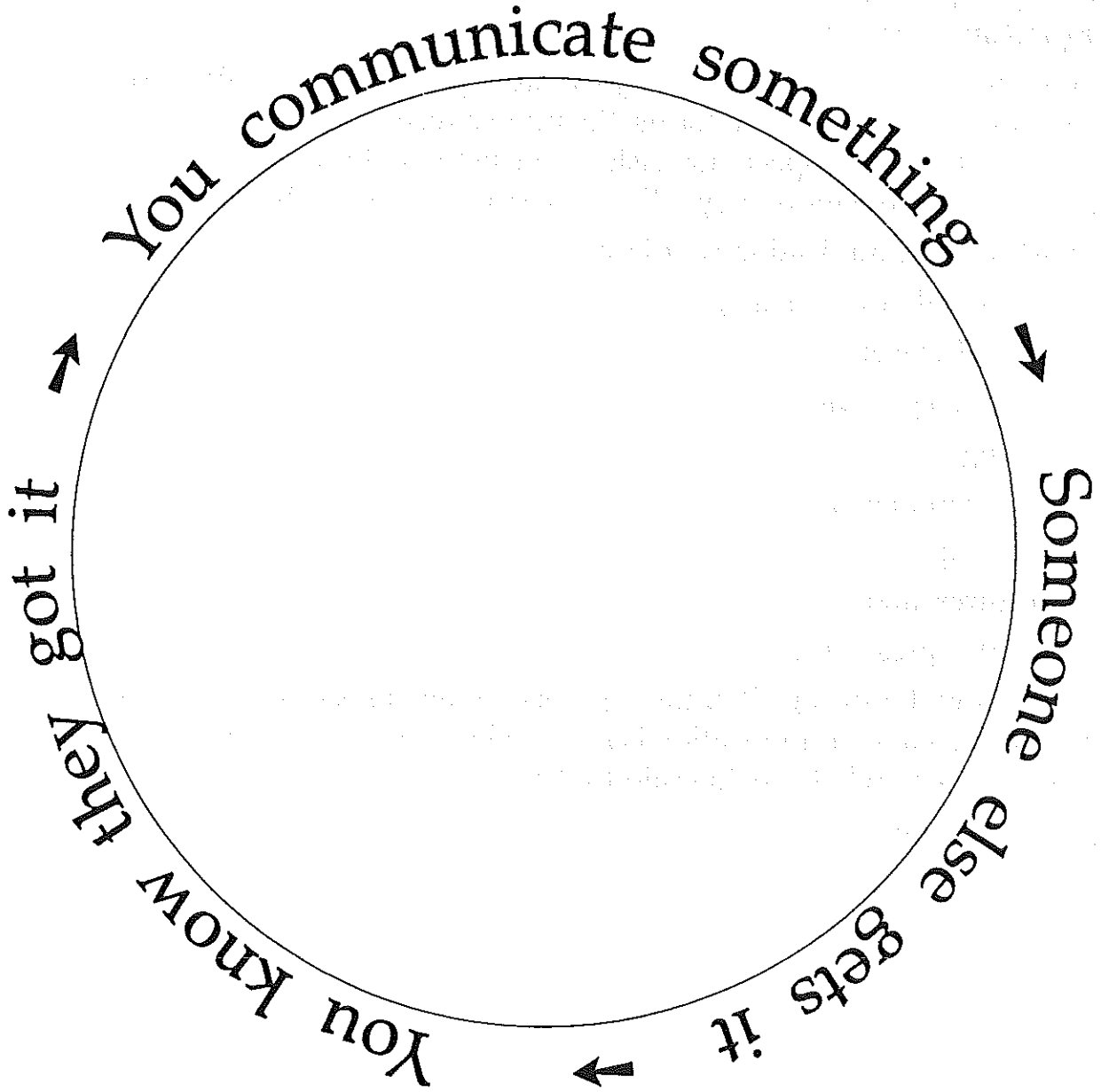
We worked with putting all of these parts together so people can more easily understand what communication is intended and so they can, in turn, listen more carefully to what is being said to them.

Enjoy "communicating" with your children this week!

Sincerely,

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# Communication is a full circle.



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## **Communication**

Say what you mean

Eye contact

Body language

Gestures

Facial expressions

Voice tone

Timing

Listening

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1. The first step in the process of recovery is to identify the problem.

2. The second step is to assess the severity of the problem.

3. The third step is to develop a plan of action.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan.

5. The fifth step is to evaluate the results.

6. The sixth step is to modify the plan if necessary.

7. The seventh step is to maintain the results.

8. The eighth step is to prevent relapse.

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