
SESSION 4

Objectives:

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

Session Outline:

- Communication
- Eye Contact
- Body Language
- Gestures
- Facial Expressions
- Voice
- Timing
- Listening
- Communicating What You Feel

Updating

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

Who made a choice or solved a problem last week differently than you might have before?

How did you feel about that?

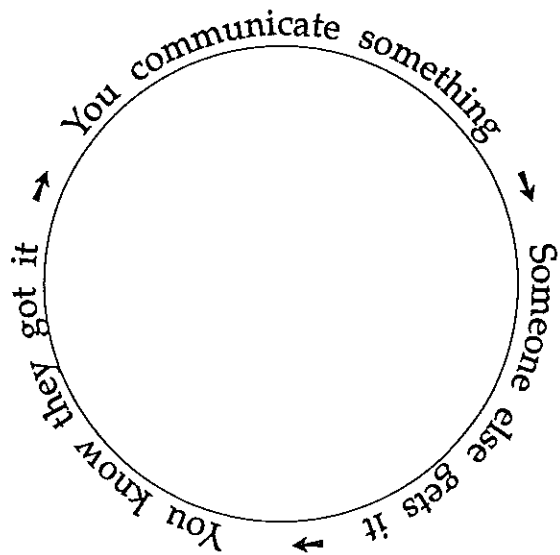
We're going to start off this week by talking about communication.

Communication

What is communication?

Communicating is one of the most complicated things you do, but it is also the only way to let people know what you think and feel, or to share ideas or feelings with the people in your life. Just as everything else we've talked about, we have choices in how we communicate. And it is important to understand your own responsibility for what you say and how you say it. You have total control over that.

Communication is circular:



Enlarged version of
Communication Circle
on page 90.

Sometimes people believe that the only way to get their needs met is through roundabout means of communicating. This is sometimes called covert communication.

Flip chart 10

Covert communication:

- ✓ Manipulating others
- ✓ Controlling others
- ✓ Lying
- ✓ Acting helpless
- ✓ Being tough
- ✓ Sacrificing or going without

Can you think of methods of covert communication?

What is the problem with these ways of communicating?

None of these choices is straightforwardly asking for what we want.

People are often surprised to learn that the best way to get what they want is to ask for it.

Learning to do this without hurting someone else or suffering ourselves takes some risk and some practice. When we communicate straightforwardly, we have to be honest and let other people know how we feel. That can be very scary. We also risk that the other person will say "no."

But, when people are able to communicate effectively and accomplish what they meant to accomplish in their communications, they feel better about themselves and have more control in their lives.

Communication is made up of many different parts and the more of those we can put together and make work for us, the more effective we will be in getting people to listen and respect our wishes.

Learning to cook is a good analogy. You can lay out all the ingredients, but learning to put them together in the right way to create a product that tastes the way you want it to taste takes planning, practice and thinking about what works, what doesn't work and why.

This is especially important when you're trying to take care of yourself. The better you are at communicating, the more you will be able to take care of yourself.

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 11

Communication:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| ✓ Say what you mean | ✓ Eye contact |
| ✓ Body Language | ✓ Gestures |
| ✓ Facial expressions | ✓ Voice Tone |
| ✓ Timing | ✓ Listening |
-

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.

For example, "Don't," 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 want and why.

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.

Now, wasn't there a difference? Eye contact effectively says, "I mean YOU."

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

Again, 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.

For example, if I were standing beside you with my arm around your shoulders and you said, "I don't want your arm around me", but you didn't move, I probably wouldn't believe you meant 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, I'll be more likely not only to understand that you don't like it, but to think you really do mean what you are saying.

There are other parts to body language. Your posture says something about how you feel and about what you are saying.

Who can demonstrate saying this sentence with different body postures (slouching, doubled over, straight and tall):

"I really feel fine."

Give each person in the group a chance to try this one or the next one so they may feel and experience how important body language is.

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

How might your movements change the meaning of this sentence (moving toward door, sitting still and not moving):

"I want to go home now."

How close you are to someone or how far away from them you stay influences the sort of things you might say.

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 their comfort zone. Have the group experiment with this in pairs. Discuss how it feels to have someone invade their comfort zone. Discuss how this is sometimes done for intimidation.

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

Discuss.

When talking to someone, pay attention to the nonverbal clues that tell you how much space is most appropriate for that particular person.

Gestures

What is a gesture?

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

What do you think the following gestures mean?

- Arms folded across chest
- Waving arms wildly
- Rubbing hands together
- Shaking fingers
- Rubbing neck
- Shrugging
- Twisting fingers

What other ones 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 do an activity to see how good you are at reading the expressions on other people's faces.

Have each group member select one of the feelings from the chart. The rest of the group should try to guess which feeling the person is experiencing just by the nonverbal clues, using face or other body language. The rule is that everyone must be silent.

Flip chart 12

Happiness
Fear
Disgust
Anger
Boredom
Worry

Surprise
Love
Bewilderment
Determination
Confusion
Pride

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.

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?

The sound of your voice, the volume, the speed of your speech all communicate. 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 whine, to angry, to unsure, to questioning, and to clear statement of fact:

"I understand that you need help with my sister, but I really need to do my homework."

This is called your tone of voice. Let's 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.

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

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

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

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.

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 response in each of these situations was the same. Was what you communicated with your tone different?

This exercise makes it pretty easy to see how often we say more than we thought we were saying.

Timing

Another important part of communication is timing. If people aren't prepared or ready to hear you, it won't matter how clearly you communicate. You need to get someone's attention first, then determine that they are prepared to listen.

Remember, communication only happens when the other person gets what you meant to say, verbally or nonverbally.

Let's try an exercise that puts all this together.

- ▶ **What if your father was reading the paper after work and you had something important to tell him, something that happened in school. How would you start?**

Actually role-play this example with the group. Most young people will simply start talking. Work with them to first get father's attention. The way they know they have his attention is that he will stop

reading and look at them. Play with the range of possibilities so they can discover what works. Most young people are quite primitive in their efforts and will suggest things like ripping the paper out of his hands, etc.

Help them recognize that the way in which they get the person's attention effects how their communication will be received. If they are inappropriate in how they get their parent's attention, the parent will focus on the inappropriate behavior, not on what the young person has to say or on the problem to be solved.

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

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 interactive.

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.

When you're nervous about something you need to communicate to someone else, it's very easy to focus all your attention inside yourself and not hear what the other person says in response to you.

One way to avoid this problem is to think about what you have to say ahead of time, to practice what you are going to communicate and finally, to remind yourself to focus outside of yourself, to concentrate on hearing the other person's reaction to what you've said.

Once you discover how to communicate more effectively and what you really feel about yourself, you have a pretty good start on learning to communicate things that you have previously been afraid to say or unsure how to communicate.

Taking responsibility for your own feelings

Another thing you will often hear people say is: "You make me . . . (angry, sad, upset). Is that possible? I don't think so. Let's try it.

Call out names of group members demanding that they be a certain way:

- (MARTY), be upset!
- (ANNIE), be sad!
- (TONY), be happy!

I can't make you feel those things. Only you can do that. So, when someone does something that annoys you, they aren't making you angry, you are allowing yourself to be angry.

This is really important to understand because it puts you in control instead of allowing the rest of the world to be in control of you.

If I say:

- Molly, your hair looks awful,
- Sandy, I hate your dress, or
- Thomas, that was a stupid answer,
- can I make you feel badly?

No, you choose to feel badly or not.

Remember that your inner voice, your thoughts, create your feelings and you decide how and what you do with those feelings.

As long as that is the case, who's in charge?

Session 4 — Self-Work 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. Practice being more effective in communicating with people — in ways that work — what you like, don't like, want and don't want.

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Session 4 of the CHALLENGE Program!

This week we discussed 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*. In CHALLENGE, 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
- *Making eye contact
- *Body language
- *Gestures
- * Tone of Voice
- * Timing
- * Listening
- *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,

Covert Communication:

- ✓ Manipulating others
- ✓ Controlling others
- ✓ Lying
- ✓ Acting helpless
- ✓ Being tough
- ✓ Sacrificing or going without

Communication:

- ✓ Say what you mean
- ✓ Eye contact
- ✓ Body Language
- ✓ Gestures
- ✓ Facial expressions
- ✓ Voice Tone
- ✓ Timing
- ✓ Listening

Feelings

Happiness

Fear

Disgust

Anger

Boredom

Worry

Surprise

Love

Bewilderment

Determination

Confusion

Pride

