

Communication Activity 1: Verbal, Nonverbal, and Spoken

- Divide participants into an even number of groups with three or four people in each group.
- Ask each group to choose an everyday task, like tying your shoelaces or filling out a day planner. It should be a task that can be completed in the room.
- Give the group two minutes to put together instructions, using any or all forms of communication — verbal, nonverbal, and written. Have them write down a series of instructions they can give to another group so the second group can complete the chosen task. If a verbal method is used, write down, “Say...”; if nonverbal communication is used, write down, “Show...”; if written communication is used, write “Read and follow each step... .”
- After two minutes, have groups exchange instructions. Ask each group to follow the other group’s instructions as written, without making any changes.
- Give participants two minutes, and then debrief with these questions:
 1. What methods of communication did you use? (Some groups will mainly use verbal and nonverbal instructions, while others will use writing or pictures.)
 2. Did you consider having someone from your group present to the other group? Why? How might this have changed things?
 3. How difficult was it to compose and write down instructions? How difficult was it to follow instructions? How did the time constraint affect the activity?

Communication Activity 3: Active Listening

- This next activity demonstrates the importance of active listening. Ask participants to pick a partner and decide who will be the speaker (the person doing the talking) and who will be the listener (the person receiving the message). First, the speakers will tell their partners about a positive or negative experience. It can be anything (examples: a great class they attended, the death of a pet, etc)
- When the speakers finish telling their story, the listeners must repeat the story back to the speakers. The speakers will then tell the listeners if the story was accurate or not and tell the listeners the correct information in the story.

Discussion questions

To the speakers: • Did your partner repeat your story back accurately? • Did you get the impression that your partner was actively listening? Why or why not?

To the listeners: • How did you use the active listening process during the storytelling? • What role did verbal and non-verbal communication skills play in effectively telling and listening to the story?