

Chapter 1

Listening Skills

Learning to listen well and pick up non-verbal cues forms an essential basis for good communication. There are six activities in this chapter, designed to be used in sequence to build good communication skills. They address non-verbal communication, the assumptions we make about others, barriers to good listening (two activities), and how to listen actively, including the use of open and closed questions.

Activity 1: Non-Verbal Communication

Learning Objectives:

To demonstrate that people are communicating even when they are not using words.

For students to increase their awareness of non-verbal communication and the difficulty of reading others' non-verbal messages.

Age Range:

Ages 7-16

Materials Needed:

A set of cards for one person each with a written or more students have ideas

excitement contentment anger

Notes for the Educator:

Body language can easily be misunderstood. Beliefs, values and attitudes, our experiences and assumptions about the meaning of body language can affect our interpretation.

Method:

Explain the learning objectives. Then have students remain standing. Give all students an opportunity to act out a situation in which they might feel a particular emotion.

Have the first person in the pair try to communicate the emotion. When they have finished, their partner should guess the emotion. The pair should discuss how the emotion was communicated and repeat the activity with the second person.

Review:

Bring students back together and discuss the following:

- the significance of non-verbal communication
- examples of successfully 'reading' non-verbal messages
- examples of 'misreading' how someone is feeling
- the ease of misinterpreting non-verbal messages
- the value of learning to 'read' people and our assumptions

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Chapter 3

Asserting Myself

Then discuss what the consequences might be for self and others if:

- a person is mostly aggressive
- a person is mostly passive
- a person is mostly manipulative
- a person is mostly assertive

Discuss what stops people being assertive, and why people often think that being aggressive is being assertive.

Now explain that you are going to focus on the skills of assertiveness in communication, and that there are four elements to assertive communication.

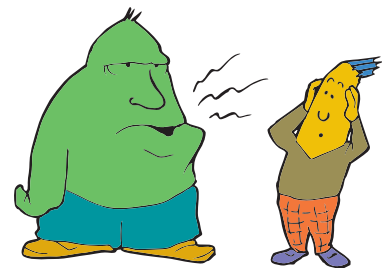
Draw a mind-map on the board, with 'Assertiveness' in the centre, and four key elements coming off from it titled, 'Tone of Voice', 'Words', 'Body Language', and 'Intention'. Then, with students, under each element note down the ways in which we can identify by what we see or hear that a person is being assertive. It will help if you can draw little pictures as well as words, or have someone in the group do this. Encourage students to study the mind-map carefully, then divide them into groups of four or five, provide each group with a large sheet of paper and felt-tip pens, cover up the mind-map and have the groups re-create it for themselves.

Review:

Remind students that:

- the four elements of assertive communication – tone of voice, words, body language and intention – must all be congruent (ie give the same message)
- if the message coming from any one of these elements contradicts the others then we are not being congruent: if we transmit incongruent messages then we are not being assertive
- most of all, the intention should be that both people will feel positive at the end of the conversation
- you have the right to express your views and say what you want, and other people have the right to express their views and say what they want

If appropriate, distribute the handout on the Four Elements of Assertive Communication (see page 21).



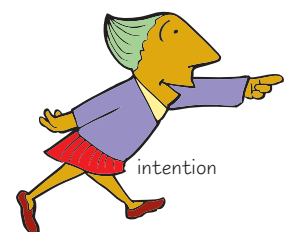
tone of voice



body language



words



intention