

# 4

## *Unit Four*

### *Effective Communication – Ages 5-8*

Total Time: 1.5 Hours

**PART 1:** Ice Breaker

**PART 2:** What is Communication?

**PART 3:** How You Say Something – Voice and Body Language

**PART 4:** Positive Listening Skills

**PART 5:** Follow-Up Activities

**ANNEXURE 1:** Evaluation

## *Part 1: Ice Breaker*

**Time:**

10 Minutes

**Objective:**

Participants will take part in an ice breaker activity to highlight elements of positive communication.

**Materials:**

None

**Techniques:**

Ice Breaker

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**TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Choose one of the ice breaker activities from the options below:

**Option One: Simon Says** - Tell the children that they will be taking part in an activity that requires really good listening skills. Explain that you will call out instructions for them to follow, but they should do the movement **ONLY** if you say “Simon says” first. For example “Simon Says hop on one foot,” or “Simon says scratch your head.” (Demonstrate as you explain.) However, if the trainer does not say “Simon Says” the children should not move. If they move, they are out of the game and need to sit down. Begin the activity when all children understand the “rules.” Continue until you find the “best” listener (the last child standing).

**Option Two: Listen and Do Three Things** – Explain that the children will need to listen very carefully to your instructions because they will need to remember what you have told them and do the items when they are given the signal. Tell the children three things to do (sample tasks include touch your nose, wave your hands in the air, jump up and down); they need to remember the tasks in the correct order. Then explain that you will say the number one and they will need to do the first task, then you will say “two” and they will do the second task, and finally you will say “three” and they will do the third task. Repeat the

activity several times until the children recognize how carefully they need to listen to your instructions. (You may want to increase the difficulty or number of the tasks if the children are finding this activity easy.)

## *Part 2: What is Communication?*

**Time:**

20 Minutes

**Objective:**

Participants will become aware of the importance of letting others know what they feel or want through clear communication.

**Materials:**

- None

**Techniques:**

- Demonstration
  - Group Discussion
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**TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Explain to the children that today's topic is communication. Ask if anyone knows what that means. After listening to their responses add that communication is talking (the way you let other people know about your ideas and feelings) and listening (the way you learn about other people's ideas and feelings).
2. Ask if anyone can read other people's minds. How do we know what other people are thinking? Ask a child or two to think of something and have the group guess what it is. Was the group right? No, people have to communicate. They have to tell us. Sometimes we have to ask. That is also a part of communication - listening.
3. Tell the children why it is important to communicate. Explain that wishing for something usually will not make it so. Asking and telling works better... and good communication works better than whining, yelling, pouting, etc. When you want or need something, use your words.

4. Ask children what they would ask for right now - the first things that pop into their minds. Stress that saying you want something doesn't make it happen. It is important to tell people what you feel and what you want. People will not know what you are thinking if you do not tell them. They might guess, but they might guess incorrectly. (Remind them of the exercise above where the children tried to guess what someone was thinking.) Being able to ask for what you want and not making people guess is important. For example, if you need more help in math but you never tell your math teacher, you will continue to struggle. If you are feeling sad but never tell your house parent, he/she won't be able to help you.
5. State that it is important that you are polite when you're asking, not demanding. Review manners such as please, thank you, and not interrupting, and emphasize the importance of showing respect for others when you communicate. Give examples of proper ways to ask for something (eg, "Excuse me, could I please use the crayons on that table?") Invite a few children to ask for what they wanted in step 4 using proper manners and respect. Note that even if you use your best manners, asking for something doesn't mean you will always get it.

Modified from When I'm Grown: Life Planning Education for Grades K – 2 (Advocatesforyouth.org)

## *Part 3: How you Say Something – Voice and Body Language*

**Time:**

20 Minutes

**Objective:**

Participants will understand that tone of voice, style of language, and body language are integral parts of communication.

**Materials:**

- None

**Techniques:**

- Demonstration
- Skills Practice

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**TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Begin this session by stressing that the way we talk or answer questions is very important. Our tone of voice, the words we use and our body language make a big difference in whether or not people understand what we mean and listen to what we are saying.
2. Ask if anyone knows the meaning of body language. Explain that body language is the way we communicate through our facial expressions and body movements. Demonstrate a few examples such as a big smile, shrugging your shoulders, a frown and looking down, etc. Then ask the children to demonstrate some examples.
3. Tell your group that you are going to ask several individuals a question and you only want them to answer "fine" in a very flat voice without any facial expressions or gestures. (Trainer: Model the behavior) Ask several children questions such as, "How was your

dinner last night?" "How did you sleep last night?" "How was school yesterday?" After they have answered, ask if we have learned anything from our questions. (NO!)

4. Now whisper a feeling to several of the children one at a time (excited, disappointed, angry, etc). Tell them they must still answer saying "fine" but now they should try to change their voice, facial expression and body language to show what feeling they have been assigned. Invite the rest of the group to guess what their feeling might have been.
5. Ask if hearing a tone of voice and seeing body language makes it easier to tell how someone feels. Discuss responses.
6. Point out that how you say things also communicates your respect for others. Discuss how they would talk to their houseparent, teacher, or friend and how it may be different for each. Give an example of saying "Hi, how are you today?" to a friend vs a houseparent or teacher demonstrating voice, language and body language. (eg, For a friend you might say "Hey bud, how ya doing?" with giggle and relaxed appearance, whereas for a teacher you might say "Hi Mrs. \_\_\_ How are you feeling today?" with good posture and a pleasant smile.) Allow the children to take turns with the sample sentences/situations from the list below (or create your own) - invite them to practice the differences aloud, imagining that they are asking the question of a teacher, houseparent, friend, social worker, etc. (Remind them to use the proper way to get someone's attention without interrupting, to show respect by calling someone by their name/title, and to use proper voice and body language.)
  - "Can you help me with this?"
  - "What is your favorite color?"
  - "I drew this picture for you. Do you like it?"
  - "I don't like having so much homework every day."

## *Part 4: Positive Listening Skills*

**Time:**

40 Minutes

**Objective:**

Participants will learn and practice the components of positive listening skills.

**Materials:**

- Two Puppets – boy and girl or animals
- Annexure 1: Evaluation

**Techniques:**

- Demonstration
- Skills Practice

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**TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Ask the group to suggest times when it's important to really listen, such as:
  - When a teacher is explaining homework
  - When a friend is feeling sad and is telling you about it
  - When your house mother is telling you how to do something
2. Ask them what would happen if people didn't really listen to each other.
3. Ask the group why it is important to listen when they are having a conversation with someone. Brainstorm ideas. Tell them: When you listen carefully while others speak, people feel that you are interested in what they have to say. You may want to make a point, but it is important to use self-control and listen to the other person.
4. Use the puppets to demonstrate the following important rules to follow:

- You should show interest in what the person is saying by facing them and maintaining eye contact. Making eye contact means looking at the person to whom you are talking or listening (not staring). Demonstrate with the puppets – have the puppets make good eye contact. Without even speaking to you, other people are constantly giving you feedback about what you are doing. If you don't make eye contact with them, you won't be aware of their reactions. Likewise, if they don't look at you while they are speaking or listening to you, they can't fully know how you are feeling.

- While they are speaking, listen and think about what they are saying to you. Too often people are thinking of what they want to say next rather than really listening to the speaker. (Demonstrate with puppets; make up a conversation between the puppets and show one puppet really listening; say out loud what the listening puppet might be thinking such as "He seems really upset..." Then demonstrate a puppet not listening to the other puppet.)

- If you agree with what they are saying, or want to show that you understand, you can nod your head or use other body language. If a friend is sad, you will want to look more serious and maybe even give them a hug. Again, demonstrate with the puppets. Hold a mock conversation and perhaps have one puppet put its arm around the other to show support and interest. Using the puppets, discuss and demonstrate other situations and appropriate body language (use the examples below or create your own).

- Your friend is worried about a test next week.
- Your friend is excited about the competition he just won!
- Your friend is disappointed that she won't be able to join her friends in a game because she has to do some homework.

- When they're finished speaking, ask a question or make a comment about what they said. People want to feel that they are being heard and understood. When you are a good listener, people will see you as a caring, respectful person and they will connect with you more easily. Again, use puppets to demonstrate through a role play.

5. When the children seem to be understanding the concepts, ask for volunteers (one at a time) to join in the role play with you where you control one puppet and they control the other. Carry on a brief conversation with the puppets and guide the children as they practice making eye contact, listening, using appropriate body language and asking questions or making comments.

6. Now have children pair up and try these new skills. Invite a pair to the front of the class at a time as they have conversations themselves (you may do this with or without the puppets depending on the comfort level of the children). Offer suggestions of conversation starters. (Examples, talk about your favorite food, movie, game, etc.) Give gentle guidance and feedback; much of this is new to the children and they may feel shy or uncomfortable. Offer praise for trying the new skills. Let them know they will be reviewing and practicing these skills in the upcoming weeks.

7. Distribute Annexure 1 and invite the children to complete the evaluation form regarding this Unit.
  - Explain that they are to circle the appropriate smile face for each part of the Unit, as well as for the Unit overall. (Circle the smile if they liked it, circle the straight mouth if it was ok, or circle the frown if they didn't like/understand it.)
  - Briefly recap what was covered in each part so their memory is fresh when evaluating.
  - Solicit comments from the group and write them on the back of your form. The older children are welcome to write comments on the back of their form if desired. Instruct them to be as specific as possible in their comments.

Activities modified from  
[http://www.socialskillscentral.com/free/101\\_Ways\\_Teach\\_Children\\_Social\\_Skills.pdf](http://www.socialskillscentral.com/free/101_Ways_Teach_Children_Social_Skills.pdf)

## *Part 5: Follow-Up Activities*

### **Time:**

Varies by Activity

### **Objective:**

Participants will review and practice material learned in this session through activities they will complete in the upcoming weeks.

### **Materials:**

**(Depending on Option Selected)**

Option One:

- Children's Picture Book that illustrates characters interacting and communicating – more pictures than text and shows body language and actions

Option Two:

- Paper for art project
- Crayons or Markers

Option Three:

- Miscellaneous props for stories such as a stuffed animal, hat, cup, shoe, etc.

### **Techniques:**

- Applying learning to daily life

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### **TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Take some time in the follow-up sessions to review the material presented in this session including the topics listed below:

- Communication includes talking and listening
  - Saying what you want or need is better than whining, pouting, yelling, etc.
  - Use your manners when communicating – show respect
  - Use appropriate voice and body language when communicating to show what you are feeling
  - Positive listening skills include eye contact, really listening, showing appropriate body language, and asking question or making comments to show you care
2. Have the children repeat the role play activity in Part 4 with puppets at first, and then without, as the goal is for them to be able carry on a conversation themselves without puppets.
  3. The following activities are also to be completed during follow up sessions:

**Option One: Pictures Tell a Story** - Explain to the children that pictures can tell a story if you look carefully for the body language. Show the children the pages in a picture book, but do not read the words (and make sure they can't read them either). Ask the children to describe what they think is going on in the story just by looking at the pictures. When you finish the book, go back and read the words and see how close they were.

*Suggested Follow-Up Discussion for the Trainer* – How can they tell what a person is feeling based on their body language? What clues can they look for? Were they surprised by how much they could discover just by looking at the pictures? How much do the words help in understanding the story?

**Option Two: Draw My Picture** – Pair up the children and explain that they will take turns giving directions for a simple drawing to their partner. They can only give oral instructions – they are not allowed to show their partner what they want them to do. The partner will need to listen carefully and follow the instructions. Sample directions include: draw a red square in the upper right hand corner of the paper; draw a blue circle in the middle of the page; draw a yellow triangle in the middle of the circle, etc.

*Suggested Follow-Up for the Trainer* – Ask the pairs to give feedback to their partners as to how the final drawing matched their directions. Invite the pairs to show the drawings to the group. What was most difficult about this activity? Where did communication work and where did it break down? Was it difficult to be specific in your directions? Was it difficult to listen so carefully to the instructions? What did you learn from this activity?

**Option Three: Listen to the Story** – Ask for a volunteer to tell a story to the group using props you provide. They can be as creative as they wish, and the more details in the story, the better. The rest of the group will listen carefully to the story because they will be asked to repeat it when the storyteller is finished.

Give a few minutes for the storyteller to think of ideas for the story and ways to use the props. Then invite them to tell their story for several minutes. At the end, ask the group to re-tell the story and see how accurate they are, especially with details. Allow other children to act as the storyteller as time permits.

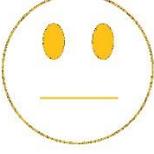
*Suggested Follow-Up for the Trainer* – Was it easy to create the story and share your thoughts with the group, or was it difficult to put your ideas into words? Was it difficult to listen so carefully to the story? Is that different from the way you usually listen to stories? How accurate were your listening skills? What did you learn from this activity?

# 4

## *Unit Four Annexures* *Effective Communication – Ages 5-8*

### **ANNEXURE 1: Evaluation**

### *Annexure 1: Evaluation*

<b>Unit 4 – Effective Communication</b>	 <b>Liked It</b>	 <b>It was OK</b>	 <b>Didn't Like It</b>
Ice Breaker			
What is Communication?			
How You Say Something- Voice and Body Language			
Positive Listening Skills			
<b>Overall Score</b>			