



COMMUNICATION STYLES AND TECHNIQUES

OVERVIEW

This workshop utilizes communication caucuses to help participants identify their individual communication styles. A challenge is presented to pairs of participants to allow them to practice, observe, and reflect on their communication styles and others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will:

- Identify their own communication style
- Recognize other people's communication styles and ways to more effectively communicate with others
- Engage in an activity to effectively speak and listen

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Laptop/computer
- Projector screen
- "Communication Styles and Techniques" PowerPoint
- Paper and writing utensils

INSTRUCTIONS:

Effective Communication (10 min.)

- **(Slide 2)** Review the agenda for the workshop. Share that everyone is expected to participate.
- BEFORE showing **Slide 3**, ask the group to brainstorm three types of communication that might be important.
- **(Slide 3)** Reveal that today you will be talking about communication in three ways: verbal, nonverbal, and listening.
- Ask the group to brainstorm ways to effectively communicate verbally, THEN show **Slide 4** and briefly discuss the ideas.
- Ask the group to brainstorm ways to effectively communicate nonverbally, THEN show **Slide 5** and briefly discuss the ideas.
- Finally, ask the group to brainstorm ways to effectively listen, THEN show **Slide 6** and briefly discuss the ideas.
- Ask everyone to find a partner and share examples of a time that they have used one of these techniques for effective communication or a time when they did not but should have. Why did they choose the technique they did?

Communication Caucuses (30 min.)

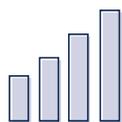
- Share that in order to communicate effectively it is important to understand your communication preferences as well as the preferences of others. Ask everyone to gather in the center of the room.
 - First, divide the group by Open and Reserved.
 - People who have an "Open" orientation towards relationships easily allow others to see their inner selves. They tend to not hold back in sharing their thoughts and feelings.

TIME



60 minutes

SIZE



Ideal for groups
of 10 to 60

RISK



Low

CAUTIONS



None



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INSTRUCTIONS, Continued:

- People who have a “Reserved” orientation towards relationships tend to hold back information that would reveal their “inner workings.” They maintain an interpersonal distance with most people.
- **(Slide 7)** Have people who think they are more “Open” move to the front of the room; have those who perceive themselves to be “Reserved” move to the back of the room.
- Ask each group to share one example of what “Open” and “Reserved” look like.
- Next, divide each group by Direct or Indirect.
 - People who are “Direct” in their pace tend to move very quickly. They are fast-paced and assertive and like to move quickly to task completion.
 - People who are “Indirect” in their pace tend to take a more laid-back approach. They approach tasks carefully and thoughtfully with no rush to the finish line.
 - **(Slide 8)** Maintaining their front-back orientation, have those who perceive themselves to be “Direct” move to the left side of the room. Those who perceive themselves to be “Indirect” should move themselves to the right side of the room.
 - Ask someone to share an example of what “Direct” and “Indirect” look like.
- **(Slide 9)** This will yield the following groupings:
 - Front Left: Socializer
 - Front Right: Relator
 - Back Left: Director
 - Back Right: Thinker
- **(Slide 10)** Show the caucusing questions and ask one person in each group to record the group’s responses. If there is a quadrant with only one person, have them reflect on the questions themselves. If the groups are really large, split them into multiple groups.
- Allow each group about 10 minutes to discuss the questions.
- After the groups are done discussing, ask the reporter for each group to share the group’s answers to the questions.
- Ask the group what things they noticed about the ways each group responded.
- **(Slide 11)** Go over the communication styles, which lays out the differences between each of the four styles.
- Ask if anyone thinks that they belong in a different group. If so, have the person move to that group.
- Ask each group to answer the question: How can other people best communicate with us? Allow each group about three minutes to answer the question.
- Have each group share their answers with everyone.
- Make the point that as important as it is to know our own communication styles, it is just as important to know what other people’s communication styles are. As we think about ways that we can best communicate with others, we need to know what they need so that we can speak to them in “their language.”
 - For example, if the person communicating were a socializer, they are going to have difficulty in communicating with a thinker if they try to do it as if the other person were another socializer. In this case, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” does not work. Rather, we need to “do unto others as they would have us do unto them.”
- **(Slide 12)** Show the reflection prompts from the “My Communication Style” slide and ask students to take out a piece of paper to fill in the prompts.
- Have them pair up with someone to share their responses.



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INSTRUCTIONS, Continued:

Behind the Back (15 min.)

- **(Slide 13)** Have students pair up with a partner. They should find someone with a different communication style than theirs. If there is an odd number of students, have one group of three with two drawers and one explainer.
- Have the pairs sit back to back, with one person facing the PowerPoint and one person facing the back of the room. Be sure the pairs are spread out.
- Have the partner facing the back of the room gather a piece of blank paper and a pen/pencil.
- **(Slide 14)** Read the following directions to the people facing the PowerPoint:
 - “Your task is to get your partner to re-create the drawing on the slide only using verbal communication. Your partner may not look at the slide, you may not look at their drawing, and you must remain seated back to back with them. You have 5 minutes.”
- After about 5 minutes, stop the exercise and have the partners turn around and face each other and share their drawings.
- Process the activity by asking the following questions:
 - What was this activity like for you?
 - What was it like giving directions?
 - What was it like receiving directions?
 - Did the pictures turn out as you planned? Why or why not?
 - What went well in your communication? What didn't go well?
 - How did your communication styles play a role in this activity?
- If they don't, bring up the following point: This exercise emphasizes communication and how difficult it can be. No matter how clear the directions seem to the giver, if they are not clear to the receiver, the results may be different than what was desired.

Questions and Wrap-up (5 min.)

- Ask the participants to reflect on how their communication type ties in with how they manage their time or set goals.
- Ask if there are any questions or final remarks.