



Participation



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Purpose: Explore and improve, communication skills to maximise young person’s ability to actively participate.

Participant learning objectives:

1. Understand the importance of effective communication
2. Be aware of skills necessary for effective communication
3. Improve ability to communicate effectively with both peers and adults

CONTENT	METHODS/ RESOURCES <i>Slides 22-33 can assist with this session.</i>	APPROX. TIME
<p>Important Skills for Active Participation & Baseline</p>	<p>Resources: Flipchart Markers Baseline assessments</p> <p>Inform participants that through this module they will be learning the skills required to maximise their participation. As a group, ask participants what skills they think are important for participation. These can be listed on flipchart at the front of the room. Probe as to why these skills are important and how they might be used.</p> <p>Ask participants to reflect on their own personal skills using the participant baselines. Inform participants of the purpose of a baseline assessment; to help understand participant’s needs, to help measure their potential and to help measure progress they have made throughout the programme. Explain that a second assessment will be conducted at the end of the programme which will allow the worker to compare skills, knowledge and understanding before and after.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>



Communication

Brainstorm as a group what we mean by communication.

Communication is essentially how we exchange information with others i.e., how we give information (speaking, body language, writing), and how we receive information (listening, reading). Important communication skills include confidence, clear and concise language, listening, empathy, friendliness and use of non-verbal communication.

Show participants the images on slide 27. Ask them to think about how each picture communicates:
How does a baby communicate? From the moment we are born we are communicating. From birth, the only way we know to communicate is to cry. This lets the parents know when baby is hungry, cold, tired, sore, scared etc. When parents get to know their babies, they can begin to recognise when baby is crying from hunger, from tiredness etc.

How does a dog communicate? Think about when your dog is excited – they might wag their tail, jump around. Or when they are sad or frightened, they might put their head down, lie on their hands etc.

Think about how communication can be more difficult when we can't see a person.

Phone call – Can't see their body language, no eye contact etc.

Text message – Can't see their body language, can't tell their tone of voice e.g., telling the difference between when someone is serious and when someone is joking. Emojis can be very useful to help express our tone of voice through text.

What about someone who is non-verbal? How might they communicate?

Would we differ how we communicate with them?

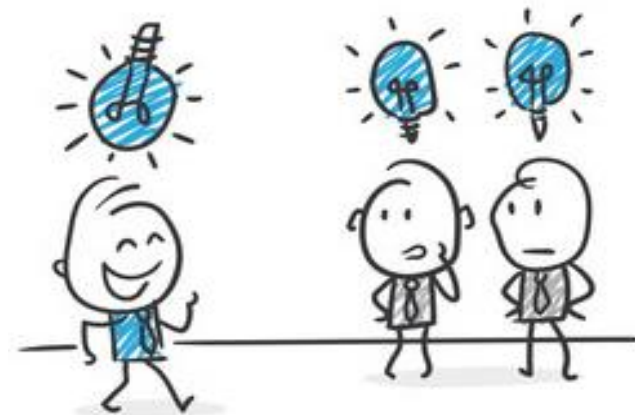
Non-verbal children and adults use key cards, actions, body language, sign language etc. to help express themselves.

Generally, they can hear and understand all that is being said to them.

Additional gestures can be used where required.

Debrief: There are lots of ways to communicate with one another. It is important we use eye contact, body language, tone, pitch of voice, emojis etc. to communicate exactly what we want to.

20 minutes



Communication Skills in Action

The following activities are great for increasing awareness around communication methods and essentially improving communication within the group.

Stand up for Fillers:

Ask participants how many of them use “like” or “um,” or “uh” or “so,” or “right” to fill a silent space? It is a nervous habit that is often rooted in the perceived discomfort of silence. This activity helps to make us aware of these fillers in conversation (or when public speaking).

Give each participant a topic that they will speak about for 1-3 minutes (topic is not important; it should be simple e.g., cinema, school, sports, music, friends etc.). During their speaking time, the remainder of the group will stand when they hear any of these fillers occur in the speech.

The group is listening, and the speaker is hyper-aware of the words that they use. It is a deliberate shock to the speaker to see the entire group stand when they hear these fillers and helps to be mindful about using precise vocabulary.

Blindfold leads:

Resources:

Blindfolds

Cones

A blindfolded person is led by a sighted person, at first across a clear area, then around increasingly complex soft obstacles such as round markers, balls etc. The sighted person can lead with physical contact at first, progressing to voice leading only.

The sighted person must support the blindfolded person and ensure they are safe. Participants can swap roles once they are finished.

Back-to-back drawing:

Resources:

Paper

Pens


Geometrical drawings

Pair off group members and instruct them to sit back-to-back. Give one participant (the listener) a blank piece of paper and a pencil, and the other member (the speaker) a geometrical image.

Ask the speaker to describe the image in detail. The drawer will attempt to recreate the image on their blank piece of paper, based upon the instructions. Neither member can see the others’ paper, and the listener may not communicate with the speaker. Allow 5-10 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

60 – 90 minutes dependent on chosen activities.



	<p>Telephone: Bring participants together, sitting in a circle. Pick one person to say a message into the ear of the person sitting next to them. That person then relays that message onto the next person and so on. Each participant is only allowed to say the message once and must say it quietly so as only the person sitting next to them can hear. Once the message gets back to the originator ask them to call out what was said to them. Is it different to the message they passed on at the beginning?</p> <p>Debrief to speakers: What steps did you take to make sure the instructions would be clear? How can these steps be translated to real-life conversations? What was it like not having feedback from the listener during this exercise? What we mean to say, and how its interpreted, are often not the same. What can you do while speaking to reduce the risk of miscommunication in real-life conversations?</p> <p>Debrief to listeners: What did you like about the speaker’s instructions? Were any of the instructions difficult to follow? How do you think your results would have been different if you had been able to communicate with the speaker? Communication is as much about being a good listener as being a good speaker. What steps can you take while listening to reduce misunderstandings in real-life situations?</p> <p>Emphasize to participants that we are continuously improving our communication skills, even as adults! Communication skills are so important for basic survival to ensure that we can ask for help when we need it and to ensure that even our basic needs are met. Communication is key if we want to maximise our ability to participate not only in the youth club but at home, in school, in our community, and in our wider society.</p>	
<p>Evaluation/ Check-Out</p>	<p>Resources: Informal evaluation ideas Choose an activity from the list provided.</p> 	<p>10 minutes</p>

