


ONE- AND TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

 **Time:** 20 minutes

 **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe 2 problems in understanding that can arise from one-way communication.
- Describe 2 benefits of two-way communication.

 **Training Method:** Large Group Activity

 **In This Activity You Will...**

- Have one volunteer use one way communication to describe a drawing of shapes to the trainees to draw (5 minutes).
- Repeat with participants allowed to ask questions (5 minutes).
- Discuss the feelings and results, focusing on communication issues. (10 minutes).

 **Materials:**

- Flipchart
- Pens

 **Preparation:**

- Prepare flipcharts with 2 different diagrams of shapes.

Instructions

1. Ask for a participant volunteer to assist with this exercise. Explain to the other participants that the volunteer is going to describe some shapes to them and their task is to simply follow instructions in sketching out the illustration.
2. Provide the volunteer with the diagram. Have the volunteer turn his or her back to the class so no eye contact is possible. Ask the volunteer to stand close to the easel so s/he can't see the trainees.
3. The volunteer can use only verbal communication, i.e., no gestures, hand signals, etc. Further, no questions are allowed on the part of the audience. In brief, only one-way communication is allowed.
4. When the exercise is completed, show the correct figure on the flipchart and ask participants to judge whether their drawings are at all similar to it. Repeat the exercise a second time (with a second diagram) allowing participants to ask questions (two-way communication).
5. Lead a discussion on the difficulties of this exercise. Explain that this exercise is about verbal and non verbal clues, being able to ask questions of speaker, and the speaker reading the listener to see if the listener is understanding. Explain to the participants that this exercise is not about doing it right but about communication.

Summary

Process exercise by asking participants:

- How many of us got confused and just “quit” listening? Why?
- Why was the one-way communication so difficult to follow?
- Even two-way communication cannot ensure complete understanding. How can we make our communication efforts more effective?
- How would the exercise have been if participants were sitting together looking at the materials?

* This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit.

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