

Communication: Participants practice effective communication skills.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Ways to Communicate
- 2) Conflict Resolution
- 3) Online communication: Internet safety
- 4) Human knot
- 5) Forgiveness

Lesson: Ways to Communicate

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What are some ways humans communicate?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants learn about different forms of communication; participants practice different forms of communication.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Communication is what we do to give and get understanding; it is the process of sending and receiving messages. Successful communication occurs when there is understanding. Communication can be verbal, using oral language to convey a message, or non-verbal, including facial expressions, body language, text or written based language. Sometimes **a message's original meaning gets lost in the translation between thought** and the act of communicating it. Teaching young people how to communicate effectively helps them maintain healthy relationships, resolve conflicts peacefully, excel in school, and eventually get and keep jobs.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 30 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. **Begin by playing the game "Telephone."** Have participants sit in a circle. Ask one participant to think of a phrase or sentence. Direct them to whisper it in the ear of the person sitting next to them. Each participant whispers what they think they heard to the next participant next to them. The last participant says the phrase or sentence out loud. Ask the first participant if that was their phrase. Did anything change? Did the message get lost or changed in translation? This is an example of verbal communication.
2. **Now play the game "Charades."** Have participants get up one at a time to act out a phrase or sentence without using any words or sounds while the others guess the phrase or sentence. Ask participants to explain what they did to communicate their message when they were unable to use words (ex: facial expressions, body language, gestures). Were others able to guess the

phrase or sentence? Was the message delivered effectively? This is an example of non-verbal communication. Explain that we all communicate all day long, whether or not we are using words. Explain that others pick up messages from our facial expressions, body language, gestures, and general demeanor.

3. Have partners get in pairs. Direct them **to communicate “hello” to their partner three different ways**. If they need help, remind them that they can use verbal words, written text, their body or a gesture, or even do something creative.

4. Next have them communicate a feeling to their partner. Give examples of feelings: sad, angry, happy, excited, jealous, confused, or worried. The other partner will guess what feeling **they are portraying**. For example if their feeling was “sad” they could say or write “I feel sad”, make a facial expression, or show with their body how they feel)

5. **Give examples from “telephone” and “charades” to demonstrate that what you want to communicate is not always what others understand**. Explain this is how rumors and gossip spread: someone tells someone a secret and it gets passed on and it gets changed and distorted **along the way, just as the message did in “telephone.”**

6. Remind participants that being clear and concise in their verbal and non-verbal communication is an important life skill that needs to be practiced.

7. Finish by using non-verbal communication to ask participants to take out their journals or **that you’ll see them later or that you love them! Have participants guess your message and then do the action.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: How do you communicate most often? How would you get people to **understand you if you couldn’t communicate that way anymore?**

EVALUATION: Did participants practice communicating in multiple ways?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants tell a story about themselves without using words. Or using only words!

Lesson: Conflict Resolution

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can conflicts be resolved peacefully?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants use scenarios and role playing to learn ways to resolve conflicts peacefully; participants examine choices and consequences involved in settling disagreements or tension.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Conflict resolution means working out a problem or disagreement without fighting, running away or going against your feelings. Knowing how to handle conflicts in a positive way can help people stay safe from violence, feel good about themselves, and learn to respect others. Physical violence, name-calling, threats, bullying, teasing, and other forms of negative communication often escalate conflicts and leads to serious consequences, including physical injury, lowered self-esteem, and punishment. Good communication involves being a good listener, **considering and respecting the other person’s point of view, working**

together to think of solutions, and learning to relax the body and calm the mind during high-tension situations. Practicing these positive communication skills can help people make responsible choices during high-tension situations and avoid violence and further problems.

MATERIALS:

- Role playing scenarios
- Large paper or board to write feelings and ideas

LENGTH OF LESSON: 30 to 45 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. **Begin by asking the participants to raise their hands if they've ever been involved in a conflict** (ex: a disagreement or a fight with someone). Brainstorm what might cause a conflict (ex: bullying, teasing, gossip, jealousy, prejudice, broken friendships, broken romances, possessions, different points of view, wanting a different outcome to a problem).
2. Ask them to brainstorm some feelings that might go along with being in a conflict (ex: angry, jealous, lonely, scared, confused, disappointed, worried, sad). Write these feelings on the board or large paper as the students say them.
3. Explain that when we are involved in a disagreement or any conflict, there are choices we can make; every choice we make has a consequence. Explain that learning about conflict resolution, or learning about how to work things out peacefully without fighting, running away, or going against your own beliefs, can keep you safe from violence, make you feel good about yourself, and help you learn to respect others.
4. Explain the role playing activity. For every scenario, watch the set-up scene, have a volunteer come and help resolve the conflict, and then brainstorm ideas together about what choices can be made and what the consequences are of those choices. Demonstrate a scenario and the conflict resolution. Ask if there are any questions.
5. Ask for volunteers or choose participants to be the actors.
6. Read the scenario and then have participants act out the scenario (see sample scenarios below, or come up with your own). Have someone come in to help resolve the conflict. Step in as needed to give suggestions. Have the participants actually say the words of the peaceful conflict resolution to practice.
7. Have the group identify the problem, the feelings that may be involved, and then have the group come up with a list of choices and their corresponding consequences. Ask: What choices can be made to escalate this incident or make it worse? What choices can be made to resolve this conflict peacefully or make it better? What choices could have been made to avoid this incident altogether? When is it helpful to ask someone (a teacher, a friend, a parent, a trusted adult) to mediate/step in and help solve a conflict?
8. Finish by asking the participants if they have an example of a positive conflict resolution situation they were part of and would like to share.

Scenarios with scripting:

Scenario #1: “I was sitting here first” (problem: stealing)—Sarah was sitting in a chair. She got up to use the bathroom. When she came back, Dana was sitting in that seat. The person who **was sitting there first wants their seat back and the other person doesn’t want to give the seat up.** (Choices: hit each other and get into a fight → someone gets hurt, they both get in trouble, no one gets the chair. OR Discuss and explain calmly, both people compromise, get another chair → everyone has a chair, no one gets hurt OR Ask a teacher for help → the teacher assists them discussing and explaining calmly, everyone gets a chair, no one gets hurt.)

Scenario #2: “That’s mine” (problem: stealing)—Jolie and Carrie are sitting next to each other eating a snack. **When Jolie turns to talk to another friend, Carrie grabs Jolie’s snack and hides it in her lap.** Jolie turns back and notices her snack is gone and suspects that Carrie stole it. **(Choices: call names, yell to give back the snack, threaten to slap her if she doesn’t give it back, grab the snack back out of her lap → someone gets hurt, both get in trouble, they stay mad at each other OR discuss and explain calmly or get a teacher, Jolie gives the snack back and apologizes, Carrie accepts the apology → they both get to eat the snack, no one gets hurt or in trouble, they stay friends)**

Scenario #3: “I heard you said you didn’t like me” (problem: gossiping, teasing, bullying)—Amina overhears a group of girls making fun of the outfit she is wearing today. She notices that Lauren, a girl who has teased her about her clothes before, is part of that group. Amina feels **like crying.** (Choices: **go yell at the group, punch Lauren, run away and hope it doesn’t happen again** → someone gets hurt, everyone gets in trouble, Lauren continues to tease and bully Amina, Amina continues to feel sad OR Amina walk up to the group and tells them how their comments make her feel → Lauren and the group apologize, Lauren and the group continue to tease Amina OR Amina gets a teacher to help her confront the group)

Scenario #4: “I thought we were friends” (problem: ditching, silent treatment, leaving out) Camille and Stephanie are good friends. They have sleepovers and hang out together at recess **every day. Over the summer Camille’s cousin Breanne from Los Angeles moved into Camille’s family’s home. Since the school year started, Camille and her cousin have been hanging out at recess together every day and Stephanie has not been invited to any sleepovers.** One day at recess Stephanie walks over to Camille and Breanne to say hi and the two girls run away from her. The next day at recess Stephanie walks over to try to say hi again and hang out with her best friend. This time instead of running away Camille and Breanne look at each other, cross their arms, and give Stephanie the silent treatment. (Choices? Consequences?)

JOURNAL PROMPT: Describe a situation you were in recently that was not solved peacefully. How would you go back and change it if you could?

EVALUATION: Were the scenarios representative of real-life situations the girls might encounter? Did the girls participate in the scenarios and the conflict resolution? Were ideas brainstormed for resolving conflict without violence or escalating the conflict?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Start a conflict managers club where students act as mediators for their peers.

Lesson: Online Communication—Internet Safety

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can you stay safe on the internet?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants learn about potential dangers of the internet; participants plan how they will stay safe when using the internet.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: The internet has created new ways for people to communicate and be connected. Through the internet and other computer technology, young people have the opportunity to gain media literacy, become technically savvy, construct identities, socialize, and be connected to people all over the world. Despite the benefits of computer innovation, cyber-bullying and the spread of rumors and gossip on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, as well as through chat room, instant messaging, and email, are growing problems. The FBI reports that by the age of 14, 77% of teens have been contacted by a predator online, 12% of teenage girls admitted to eventually meeting strangers they first met online in person, and chat room strangers are implicated in nearly 20% of cases of missing teens aged 15 to 17 each year (Baeza 6). Teaching young people about online safety is as important as teaching them about the benefits of computer technology.

MATERIALS:

- Computer with internet access
- Videos or online videos about online safety
- Paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin a discussion about internet use. Ask participants: Have you ever used the internet before? What do YOU use the internet for? What CAN the internet be used for? (ex: research/learn about things, get/share news, chat with friends, look up the bus/train/airplane schedule, watch movies/TV shows, play computer games, listen to music, look up books at the library, check the weather, look up sports scores, find a job, etc)
2. Explain that although the internet can be used for all of these amazing purposes, sometimes it is used to hurt others. Explain it is important to learn about the potential dangers of the internet so you can use it for all its benefits while staying safe.
3. Show videos or online videos about online safety. Show public service announcements about cyber-bullying, stories of spreading gossip or photos that have led to suicide, and stories about kidnapping or someone getting hurt that happened as a result of meeting someone online.
4. Ask participants to think about the videos they saw and answer: What do you need to be careful about on the internet? Explain they need to be careful about: Predators—**people aren't** always who they say they are, people might lie to you, people might try to entice you with something they know you like and then trick you into meeting them; Bullying—**if you wouldn't**

say it out loud, why say it online?; Website content—if you see something that makes you uncomfortable, report it to a trusted adult.

5. Help participants understand the Internet is forever: everything they post online is tracked and stored and will follow them to future job interviews and college entrance interviews. Also, explain that victims/targets of bullying should not respond to the messages, but should print out the messages or pictures as evidence and report it to a trusted adult.

6. Ask if there are any questions about anything they have heard or seen today.

7. Pass out paper and pens. Have participants create a rule sheet about internet safety to post by a computer. Assist as necessary. Have participants write 5 to 10 rules to remind them how to **be safe when using the internet. Use the “Online Safety Rules for Kids” by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and ikeepsafe.org as examples:**

- I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone numbers, **parent’s work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school to anyone online.**
- I will tell my parent/guardian right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will **never agree to get together with someone I “meet” online. If my parents/guardians agree to a meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my parent/guardian along.**
- I will never send someone my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents/guardians.
- I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way makes me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will print out the messages or pictures as evidence and report it to a trusted adult.
- I will talk with my parents/guardians so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon a time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

8. Have participants post their rules next to computers in the Girls Only space, at school, or at home.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What would you like to look up on the internet? If you had a pen-pal from another country that you communicated with over the internet, what would you tell them about yourself? If you created your own website, what would it be about?

EVALUATION: Did participants learn about potential dangers regarding the internet? Did participants brainstorm ways to stay safe on the internet? Did participants create a paper to post by their computer reminding them about internet safety?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Help the participants set up their own email account. Engage participants in weekly internet searches on various topics related to Girls Only.

Lesson: Human knot

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How are we all connected? What does it mean to work as a team?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Students work together to untangle their human knot to form a connected circle without letting go of their hands.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: This is a fun, physical and visual way for students to see that we are all connected and practice various communication and problem solving skills.

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Clear a space so there is enough room for groups of 10 to stand comfortably in a circle.
2. Have participants stand shoulder to shoulder facing each other in the circle.
3. Explain that this game is about working together and seeing how we can communicate to untangle ourselves. Remind participants they will try to untangle themselves without letting go of their hands.
4. Direct participants to reach across the circle with one hand and shake hands with another participant. If this is used as an ice breaker, have participants introduce themselves and then continue holding hands.
5. Now direct participants to reach their other hand across and hold hands with someone else.
6. Explain that you'd like them to untangle themselves, without letting go of hands, into a circle.
7. Have group work for 10 minutes.
8. Remind students that by making small adjustments with their hands, arms, legs, feet, and whole bodies, as well as by maintaining a positive attitude (ex: **“we can untangle ourselves”**), they can make a big difference for their team.
9. If there is too much of a struggle, offer the group one unclasp and reclasp of hands. The group must discuss and decide which unclasp and reclasp would be most useful.
10. If a group untangles into a circle quickly, have them try the exercise again. It is okay if some group members are facing backwards when the circle is finished.
11. Congratulate a group when it untangles itself, though it is unnecessary to make this into a race or competition since the process of untangling is the focus of this exercise.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What did you like about the “human knot” activity? What did you learn about yourself by doing this activity?

EVALUATION: Were students able to cooperate with each other as they worked to untangle their bodies? What lessons were learned about communication throughout the activity?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Try this in larger or smaller groups and see how the activity varies. Use this as a sponge activity to get the group moving between activities or as a getting to know you activity.

Lesson: Forgiveness

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is forgiveness? What can forgiveness look like?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants discuss what forgiveness means; participants discuss the benefits of forgiveness; participants strategize how to practice forgiveness.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Forgiveness is letting go of anger and resentment you feel towards somebody who has done something to you. Forgiving someone for something they have done to you, no matter how big or small, requires compassion, empathy, and courage. Recognizing the power of forgiveness helps young people maintain healthy relationships, build strong friendships, and think before they act.

MATERIALS:

- Board or large paper
- Videos or online videos
- Stories of forgiveness
- Writing paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Ask participants what forgiveness means. Record their ideas as they give them.
2. Explain that forgiveness is letting go of anger and resentment you feel towards somebody who has done something to you. You may forgive someone for something minor like bumping into you or taking your seat at Girls Only. You may forgive someone for something like leaving you out at recess or forgetting to call you on your birthday. You may forgive someone for something major like breaking up with you or physically hurting someone in your family. Forgiveness is not easy and it might take a long time to forgive someone or for someone to forgive you.
3. Show videos, online videos, and stories of examples of forgiveness. Share stories such as:
 - Elizabeth Eckford was a 15-year old African-American student who attended Little Rock High School in Arkansas in 1957. She is known as one of the Little Rock Nine because she is one of the nine young African-American students who went to the all-white high school after the Brown vs. Board of education decision in 1954. This law made segregation, or separation, of blacks and whites illegal in education; before this, black children and white children could not attend the same school. Many white students were not supportive of this decision and did not treat the black students as equals. On her very first day of high school, Elizabeth had to walk through a mob of white students and grown-ups who were yelling and threatening to hurt her. She was brave but very afraid. During her time at Little Rock High, Elizabeth was threatened and harassed and even had to have the National Guard come to protect her and the other black students.

Elizabeth suffered from nightmares and paranoia for a long time because of her experience at Little Rock High. There is a famous picture of Elizabeth walking to school bravely while the white mob follows her. 34 years after the picture was taken, Hazel Massery, one of the white women shown in the picture yelling, apologized to Elizabeth. They started talking more and Elizabeth forgave her and they are now friends.



- Tariq Khamisa was 20-years-old when he was killed while delivering a pizza. His assailant was 14-year-old Tony Hicks who shot him on orders from an 18-year-old gang leader. **After his son's murder, Tariq's dad, Azim Khamisa, didn't seek revenge, but saw two children lost, one forever and one to the state prison system. Azim established the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF) to honor his son and to "stop kids from killing kids." He reached out to Ples Felix, Tony Hicks' grandfather and guardian. Together, they have spoken to thousands of children about the "power of forgiveness" in order to break the cycle of youth violence. Tony Hicks pled guilty to murder in 1996 and delivered a remorseful speech at his sentencing, accepting responsibility for his actions and praying for Tariq's dad's forgiveness. Tony was sentenced to prison for 25 years to life. The foundation continues to change the lives of young people by empowering them to make positive and nonviolent choices (TKF).**



4. Ask participants what they would have done in each situation. Could they have forgiven the person? Why or why not? There is no right or wrong answer!
5. Begin a discussion about forgiveness by asking: Why might you want to forgive someone? (ex: they asked for forgiveness; they said they were sorry; they made it up to me; I think they paid enough; I wanted to let go of my own anger; I was over it; it made me feel good to forgive them) Why might you want someone to forgive you? (ex: you know what you did hurt them; you said you were sorry; you have changed) **Who are you hurting if you don't forgive someone?**

(ex: yourself because the anger and resentment live inside of you) Who benefits from forgiveness? (if it is genuine, everyone!)

6. Explain that forgiveness is a process. Forgiving someone for something they have done which hurt you and made you angry or sad is difficult. It requires compassion, empathy, and courage.

7. Continue the discussion about forgiveness by asking: How could you tell someone that you forgive them? (ex: **I forgive you; it's ok; thank you for telling me you're sorry**) How could you show them? (ex: give them a hug) How could you ask for forgiveness? (ex: I am sorry; please forgive me) Is forgiving the same as forgetting? If you forgive someone, does it mean you have to forget what they did to you? Do you have to forgive someone? If you ask for forgiveness and **you don't get it, what will you do? (respect their decision; leave them alone; be patient; live with the consequences)** There is no right or wrong answer!

8. Pass out paper, pens and pencils. Explain they will now have a chance to ask someone for forgiveness or to give someone forgiveness by writing a letter. They do not have to send the letters!

9. Ask participants to think about the following questions: Is there something you would like to be forgiven for? Why do you deserve forgiveness for that? Is there someone you would like to forgive for something? What would you like to say to them?

10. Have participants write their forgiveness letters. If they are asking for forgiveness they **should begin their letter with: "Please forgive me for..."** If they are giving forgiveness they **should begin their letter with: "I forgive you for..."** Assist as necessary.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What do you like about forgiveness? What don't you like about forgiveness?

EVALUATION: Did participants define forgiveness? Were participants exposed to examples of forgiveness? Did participants brainstorm ideas for practicing forgiveness? Did participants write a letter asking for or giving forgiveness?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a guest speaker to Girls Only to share a story of forgiveness and compassion.