

Avoiding Conflict: Week 1

Month: Sept.

Week #: 4

Day: b. Tues. Time: 30-45 min.

Active Listening: Telephone Game

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Objectives/Aims

The students will: be able to respond to someone's anger using the skill of active listening.

Materials

none

Illustration

The one boy heard something and is passing it along to the blond-haired boy who heard something different who passed it on to the girl who heard... Is anybody really listening?



Background

When someone verbally attacks us our natural tendency is to defend ourselves by responding in kind. A useful way to avoid a conflict and even heal the situation is to use a technique called 'active listening.' In essence, active listening is when you listen carefully to the other person's words and acknowledge that person's feelings. Then, you try to state what you heard or observed using your own words (paraphrasing). Finally, you

make sure that you heard and understood them correctly by listening and watching for their reaction to your paraphrasing.

Group Activity

1. Sitting in a circle, tell the students that you are going to play the game 'Telephone.' You play the game by whispering a silly sentence such as "The cow wore cowboy boots to bed" into the person's ear that is seated next to you. This process is repeated all around the circle until it returns to you. Invariably, the message gets jumbled somewhere along the way.

2. Tell them that you are going to play the game again, only this time, they can repeat the sentence back to the person who gave it to them to make sure that they heard it correctly. For example: (Person **A** whispers to the next person, **B**, in the circle) "The red dots rained in a silly song of peanuts." **B** whispers back, "You said, 'The red dots rained in a silly song of peanuts.'" **A** either nods in assent or corrects **B**.

Group Discussion Questions

1. What happened the first time we played the game?

A: The sentence got messed up.

2. Why did it work better the second time we played?

A: Because we repeated what the other person said and then we made sure we heard it correctly.

Conclusion

Say, “Yes the communication technique we just approximated is called ‘active listening.’ True active listening is when you listen carefully to another person’s words and feelings. Then you tell him or her what you heard, being sure to include how he or she felt. Finally, you check to make sure you heard he or she correctly.” Have the students use active listening with what you just said. You might need to repeat it several times and put it in simpler terms.

Active listening can prevent conflicts by making sure communication is clear and understood. It can help resolve conflicts because if we use it with another person who is angry or upset with us, he or she will feel as if both the problem and his or her feelings have been heard. Try it with your brothers or sisters, friends and even your parents and you might be amazed!



The one boy heard something and is passing it along to the blond-haired boy who heard something different who passed it on to the girl who heard... Is anybody really listening?