

2. Flipping the Switch

JUST THE FACTS: The purpose of this activity is to encourage youth to discuss the different types of communication they might use in different situations and environments. It introduces the idea that language/communication varies by context - and that it's important to understand what might be acceptable and expected in one setting may not be appropriate in another.



Time

30 Minutes



Materials

- Activity 2
- Optional: Flip chart/markers



Directions

Ask participants to describe or demonstrate how they communicate with their friends. Then ask how they communicate with family members. Finally, ask how they are likely to communicate with an employer at a job interview.

Discuss the differences and similarities in the participants' responses. Ask the group:

- Why is each situation different?
- What are the expectations of each person?
- What would happen if you greeted your friends in the way you greeted an interviewer?
- What would happen if you greeted an interviewer the same way you greet your friends?

Knowing how to communicate with people in the right context for a given situation is an important skill, as there are often unspoken rules and standards that are just expected. For example, it's common practice in the professional world to shake hands with people when meeting, rather than offering a high-five or a hug. We might use slang with our friends when talking about what happened at school or at a party, but we would usually use different words and mannerisms when telling our parents the same information.

Use Activity 2 to compare and contrast the differences in how we might share the same type of information to different groups.



Conclusion

Discuss the following ideas with participants, encouraging an honest dialogue:

1. When the group changes, does the message change? Why or why not?
2. What are some examples of communication (both verbal and non-verbal) that you should always try to practice when communicating with an employer? How would your friends react to you if you communicated with them in the same way you would to an employer?



Journaling Activity

We all communicate differently with different people in our lives. Does the way you communicate (or say things) affect how others perceive you? Explain.



Extension Activity

We build great relationships by learning to become great communicators. This is not always an easy task as we sometimes may experience barriers to communication - especially in the workplace. Take some time to explore with the group the following eight barriers. Think about what they are and ways in which these barriers can be lessened or eliminated for successful communication. The facilitator may wish to emphasize the importance of non-verbal communication skills, as young people often overlook these skills.

- Physical
- Perceptual
- Emotional
- Cultural
- Language
- Gender
- Interpersonal
- Generational

Activity 2. Flipping the Switch

Consider the following situations. Create a list, discuss, draw a picture, or encourage participants to act out the different ways one might communicate with each of following groups:

- FRIENDS
- FAMILY
- PROFESSIONAL (INTERVIEWER, EMPLOYER, TEACHER, ETC.)

Be sure to explore BOTH verbal language (what we say and how we say it, i.e., tone of voice) and non-verbal language (facial expressions, behavior, body language, etc.)

SITUATION 1: Saying hello or goodbye

Friends:

Family:

Professional:

SITUATION 2: Asking for help

Friends:

Family:

Professional:

SITUATION 3: Emailing or texting

Friends:

Family:

Professional:

SITUATION 4: Showing excitement

Friends:

Family:

Professional:

SITUATION 5: (Create your own)

Friends:

Family:

Professional:
