

1. What's Your Point?

JUST THE FACTS: This activity helps participants understand the importance of being specific when offering and receiving communication. Often times our meaning gets lost, twisted, or misunderstood because we haven't been specific enough in our communication or we haven't asked clarifying questions. These role plays are designed to demonstrate the value of being specific in communication...TO others and in what is received FROM others.



Time

20 minutes



Materials

- A few copies of Activity 1 (at least one copy per volunteer actor/actress).
- Costumes and other props, if possible.



Directions

Ask for volunteers to act out a short role play. Each skit requires two people: one employee and one supervisor.

In the first role play, Jade has a job mowing lawns and receives some not-so-positive feedback from Mr. Z., a client.

In the second role play, Will works at a dentist's office and has gotten into some trouble with his boss, Ms. T.

Suggestion: Encourage participants to ad-lib, or improvise, if they feel comfortable. Giving youth permission to ad-lib often makes activities more "real" and memorable. In addition, youth may wish to retry one or more of the skits and create their own characters.

After each skit is read, ask the following questions:

- **Role Play #1:** How did Jade handle Mr. Z.'s comments? What did she do right? Was there anything she could have done differently? What about Mr. Z.? What could he have done differently?
- **Role Play #2:** How do you think Ms. T. handled the situation with Will's lateness? How did Will handle Ms. T.'s disapproval? What might he have done differently? What might Ms. T. have done differently?



Conclusion

In either of these role-play situations, the employee could have “copped an attitude” or gotten defensive with the adult. Reread one or both of the activities and act out the situation differently. What would it have looked and sounded like if Jade had not demonstrated such a mature attitude? What would it have looked and sounded like if Will hadn’t offered a suggestion for his situation?

Because each employee remained calm and asked additional questions to get clarity about each situation, he/she was able to communicate with the other person - and clearly identify the problem.

Is this easy or difficult for you to do in most situations? If it’s easy, what are some strategies you use that help you to “keep your cool”? If it’s difficult, what might you try to do differently?



Journaling Activity

Think about a time when a parent, teacher, or friend criticized you. What happened? How did this make you feel? How did you handle it? Are you proud of the way you handled it? What might you do differently if something like this happens in the future? Did this experience change the way you offer feedback to others?



Extension Activity

Divide the group into smaller groups (no more than four per group). Have participants share (if they are comfortable) the situation they used for their journal entry. Use the situations to create and act out new role-play situations for the other groups. Three discussion questions should be written as well - and discussed as a group. Create three questions to be used with the larger group after the role-play is acted out.

Activity 1. What's Your Point?

ROLE PLAY #1

Scenario: Jade has her first job mowing lawns. She works for her best friend's brother who owns a landscaping company. She's had the job for about three weeks and really feels like she's getting into the groove. In fact, it's the perfect job for her: she loves being outside and appreciates the fact that she can work on her own and even listen to her MP3 player! Jade arrives early at Mr. Z.'s house (her first customer of the day) and gets ready to begin mowing.

Mr. Z.: You're finally here!

Jade: Hi, Mr. Z. Yes, I'm here to mow your lawn.

Mr. Z.: Well, you didn't do a very good job last week.

Jade: I wasn't the person who mowed your lawn, but I'd like to hear why you were unhappy with the job.

Mr. Z.: It was just a mess!

Jade: Can you please be more specific? What exactly didn't you like? In what way was it a mess?

Mr. Z.: Well, it looked just awful.

Jade: Mr. Z., I really want to make sure that whatever upset you last time doesn't happen again. If you will tell me exactly what you want done differently in the future, it will really help me to be sure your lawn is mowed just the way you like it.

Mr. Z.: Well, the cut grass was left on the lawn, and the edges weren't straight.

Jade: Okay, let me be sure I understand. Besides mowing, you want us to be sure to rake up, remove the cut grass, and be more careful to straighten the edging.

Mr. Z.: Yes, that is exactly what I expect!

Jade: Thanks, Mr. Z. I'll be sure to do those things today, and I will let the boss know that's what you'd like done from now on.

Mr. Z.: Thank you very much.

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ROLE PLAY #2

Scenario: Will works in a large dental office and winds up rushing to get to work every day after school. His job tasks include filing, making photocopies, stuffing envelopes, and answering the telephone. Ms. T, the office manager, has asked to speak with Will about his time sheet.

Ms. T.: Hello, Will. I would like to talk with you.

Will: Yes, Ms. T.?

Ms. T.: Will, I've been watching your time this week, and I'm quite concerned.

Will: Ms. T., I see that you're not happy, but will you please be more specific?

Ms. T.: You're not getting here on time.

Will: I know I've been arriving to work late, and I am sorry.

Ms. T.: Well, look at your time today. You were supposed to be here at 3:15 this afternoon and it's now 3:30 and you just walked in. We need to be able to depend on you to be here at the time you're scheduled to work.

Will: I understand that you expect me to be here on time. I'm getting here as quickly as I can after school. Would it be possible to change my start time to 3:30? I can put in the extra 15 minutes at the end of the workday instead.

Ms. T.: Well, I suppose we can try that. Are you absolutely sure that you can make it here every day by 3:30?

Will: I'm sorry that I've been getting here late and upsetting you. I really do think that I can be here every day by 3:30, but if for some reason I can't make it here by that time, I will be sure to call to let you know.

Ms. T.: That would be very helpful. Thank you, Will.