

MESSAGE PASSING TASK (group activity)

TEACHING NOTE: Duplicate the next page and cut into slips for this exercise.

GOAL: To experience how it feels to be unable to communicate using speech effectively. To experience how it feels to be conversing with a person unable to use speech effectively.

1. Group participants into pairs. Pairs designate one person to be communicator and one person as listener.
2. Explain purpose of exercise: "The communicator will receive a message with some guidelines on how to communicate it. They will have three minutes to communicate the message to their partner. The partner's job is to understand the message. Do not show partner the slip of paper or tell them the message and guidelines!"
3. Hand out papers with messages and constraints to communicators.
4. Monitor groups through three minute time period. At end, let them share their message and discuss briefly in their pair.
5. Switch roles within each pair and provide new communicator with a message to communicate.
6. Discuss success and problems. Potential questions:
 - Who was successful in message passing? What strategies could you use? What was your message?
 - How did it feel to be the communicator?
 - How did it feel to be the listener?
 - How much energy did it take in each role?
 - How would it feel to communicate like this everyday?
 - How would it feel to have a family member who used this type of communication all the time?

TEACHING NOTE: Discussion points might include: slower pace, frustration, not being able to communicate exactly what wanted to say, partner making assumptions about what message was, partner needing to take much more active role than usual, easy to see why communicator might become passive because it takes so long to communicate.

1. "Hello my name is Anita and I am 32 years old."
 - no talking
 - no writing
2. "I like to eat ice cream for breakfast."
 - may only say "me" and "ice cream"
 - no eye contact
 - no writing
3. "I hate to eat gross food at my sister's."
 - no talking

-no writing, but may draw with your non-dominant hand

4. "I live in Highgate"
 - may only vocalize (no words/word approximations)
 - no writing
 - may use gestures
5. "What time is the next bus downtown?"
 - no facial expressions
 - no talking, no gestures
 - may use eye gaze
6. "Did you see the news last night?"
 - no talking or writing
 - can draw and use gestures
7. "My mother is driving me crazy."
 - no talking, may use grunts
 - no writing or gestures
 - can use facial expressions
8. "I hate peanut butter cookies!"
 - no talking or writing
 - can gesture
9. "Your hair looks great today."
 - no talking, except for saying "ga" or "ka"
 - no writing or gestures
 - can use eye gaze
10. "I had a great summer. We went camping."
 - no talking except to say "uh"
 - no writing, but can gesture
 - can use facial expressions and eye gaze