

### Activity: **NLP Challenge**

#### Overview

We all have our preferences for taking in and processing information. Knowing our own strengths and the preferences of others can help us work together to avoid conflict, and allow us to easily move through conflict when it occurs. *NLP Challenge* provides the opportunity for group members to develop an appreciation for the differences in perceptions of different people and to appreciate the need to address people in their preferred communication style(s).

#### Set Up

- Paper and pencil for each pair
- Written patterns of movement (e.g. pre-made dance steps) are optional

#### Instructions

1. Ask participants to pair up. Explain that each participant will have the opportunity to be the “sender” of information and the “receiver” of information for three rounds.
2. Have pairs decide who will be the first sender and who will be the first receiver.
3. Explain the following instructions.

##### Round One

For the first round, the receiver sits with his or her back to the sender and has a pencil and paper in front of him or her. The sender, using his or her index finger, draws several specified pictures on the back of the receiver. The receiver must draw on the paper exactly what he or she believes the sender is drawing. During this round:

- The sender may not speak.
- The receiver may not turn around or look at the sender. The receiver may talk to the sender (it is optional whether you tell them this information).
- One drawing should be a picture (house, tree, known design).

- One drawing should be a telephone number (10 or more digits).
- One drawing should be a pattern or directions (e.g., a dance step or how to move in order to reach a specific object placed in a room). Be creative.

##### Round Two

For round two, the sender must tell (whisper to) the receiver specific information, and the “receiver” must follow the instructions exactly. During this round:

- The receiver may not turn around or look at the sender.
- The receiver may talk to the sender (it is optional whether you tell them this information). It is important that the sender not tell what the object is, but rather describe how to draw it. For example, “draw a horizontal line. Next, draw a vertical line going up about 3 inches from one end of the horizontal line ...”
- The sender may not demonstrate, show, draw, or communicate except by verbal instructions.
- The sender may not repeat the exact same instructions twice.
- The sender chooses three of the following options (or make up others):
  - The sender can ask the receiver to draw something simple such as a landscape or a building, describing how to draw it without naming any objects.
  - The sender tells the receiver a 10-digit (or longer) phone number (a different number from round 1) without repeating it, and the receiver must write it down.
  - The sender gives directions for how to get to a certain place in the room. Be creative and include ducking, walking backwards, or crawling.

##### Round Three

For the third round, the sender demonstrates or shows the receiver exactly what she/he is to do or write. During this round:

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- The sender may not speak or draw, but may demonstrate in any way that is effective.
- The receiver may talk to the sender (it is optional whether you tell them this information).
- The sender chooses three tasks from previous rounds or makes up others. For example:
  - The sender shows a picture or drawing of a dance to the receiver and then asks him/her to do the dance steps.
  - The sender shows the receiver a sequence of moves and the receiver repeats the movements.
  - The sender shows the receiver a phone number and asks him or her to write it down.

Once all of the tasks have been completed, ask participants to switch roles and repeat the process. Encourage them to try new tasks and keep the new receivers guessing!

### Story Line

You have applied for the opportunity to serve as a member of a group traveling to the inner rain forest to collect important data that could result in the cure for cancer. In order to ascertain which team to place you on should you be accepted, you must go through a series of assessments that will let the admissions group know where your strengths lie in receiving and storing information.

### Safety

Remind participants to play with respect and care for the people around them. Participants should be mindful when moving from place to place, and be gentle when

writing on each other's backs. Keep a close watch for unsafe behavior and address it immediately.

### Variations

Try facilitating this activity with any number of different tasks. The drawings, movements, and dance steps can be at your discretion and specific to your group. Be creative and this activity may be varied in many ways!

### Reflection

#### Discover

- In what ways have you experienced conflict that arose because of differences in the processing of information? Give a specific example when, because of style differences, conflict arose. How might you manage that situation knowing what you know now?
- What are some of the key behaviors, words, or mannerisms that will give you important clues about another person's style?

#### Connect

- Think of your peers, teachers, parents, and siblings. Reflect on your interactions with them. Describe how differences or similarities in style might influence potential conflicts with each one. What can you do to work with those differences?

#### Create

- How can you use your awareness of another person's style to work together so conflict does not arise or you move through it when it does?