



Exploring Leadership

COMMUNICATION: NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Did you know that most of what we communicate doesn't even come from the words we speak? Research shows that up to 90% of communication is non-verbal (Watson-Stone). Every gesture, facial expression, and movement adds meaning to your words—or can completely change it.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

How frequently do you use non-verbal communication? What if you couldn't use body language or facial expressions—how would that affect your interactions?

Effective communication means aligning your words with your actions. Non-verbal cues like eye contact, smiling, and open gestures help build trust and understanding. By being mindful of your body language, posture, and expressions, you can strengthen your ability to connect with others and deliver messages that feel clear, natural, and impactful.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Learn how to meaningfully use non-verbal communication.
- Identify situations when non-verbal communication is important.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Scripts for each participant (see Appendix A)
- Strips of paper with feelings like guilty, rushed, bored, sad, hungry, angry, disgusted, scared, and more.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

This activity helps you practice reading emotions and improving non-verbal communication skills in a fun, interactive way.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Encourage everyone to fully participate. Activities are more enjoyable when participants are excited about what they're doing.
- Other fun scenarios to try:
 - Inviting someone to a party
 - Going on a first date
 - Planning a fun summer activity

- Pair up participants, assigning one person as "A" and the other as "B."
- Provide each participant with a copy of the script (see Appendix).
- Give "B" a slip of paper with a secret emotional cue (e.g., rushed, bored, or guilty) to guide their non-verbal communication.
- Start with Part 1: "A" reads their lines aloud, while "B" communicates only through non-verbal cues like gestures, facial expressions, and posture.
- After Part 1, "A" guesses the emotion "B" was portraying.
- Switch roles for Part 2: Give "A" a new emotional cue, and have "B" read their lines aloud while "A" communicates non-verbally.
- At the end of Part 2, "B" guesses the emotion "A" was acting out.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What challenges did you face during the activity?
- Which non-verbal actions helped you communicate the best?
- Why is non-verbal communication important?
- If you did this activity again, what would you do differently?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- When will you use non-verbal communication in your daily life?
- How can you practice non-verbal communication every day?
- Why is it important to pay attention to your body language?
- How do you plan to use the non-verbal skills you learned today?



CONCLUSION:

Mastering non-verbal communication can transform the way you interact with the world. It's the bridge between your words and the emotions behind them. A thoughtful gesture or confident stance can amplify your message, making it more memorable. Whether you're speaking to a friend, giving a presentation, or meeting someone for the first time, your ability to combine verbal and non-verbal communication will leave a lasting impression. The way you carry yourself could be just as important as what you say.

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REFERENCES

- Nonverbal Communication Activities: <https://www.thoughtco.com/nonverbal-communication-activities-1857230>
- American Public University: <https://onlinecareertips.com/2020/04/effective-nonverbal-communication-leadership/>



APPENDIX:

PART 1

A: Have you seen my book? I can't remember where I put it.

B:

A: The murder mystery.

B:

A: No. It's the one you borrowed.

B:

A: Whatever. Maybe it's under the chair. Can you look?

B:

A: How long are you going to be?

B:

A: Forget it. I'll find it myself.

B:

PART 2

A:

B: Which one?

A:

B: Is this it?

A:

B: I thought it was a romance

A:

B: OK--just give me a minute.

A:

B: Why so impatient? No need to be bossy.

A:

B: Wait—I found it!