

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication takes place when both sides (the receiver and the sender) have opportunities to speak, give and ask for feedback, and generally strive to understand the other's message. When only one person is given the opportunity to speak, one-way communication exists and can lead to misunderstandings.



**St. John Ambulance
Brigade Leadership
Manual, 1996**
discusses the basics of
communication.

This exercise helps to discover first hand the problems with one-way communication and the resulting importance of two-way communication.

Materials needed:

Person 1 paper
 1 pen or pencil

Person 2 geometric design (*see sample on next
page*)

*Note: DO NOT show geometric
design to your partner

Sitting back to back, ask your partner to draw the shape you describe. You may only give verbal direction. The receiver (drawer) of the information is not permitted to speak, ask questions or seek feedback in any form.

When the diagram is finished, compare the newly drawn picture to the original design.

- Identify differences in the two pictures, and discuss why they may have occurred.
- Identify distractions (if any) or other barriers to communication (i.e. he talked in inches, but I only understand centimetres).

Group Exercise

This exercise can also be used as a tool to teach communication techniques within a youth program. Plan a half hour to complete the exercise. Have the group pair off, in back-to-back fashion around the room. Give one partner a copy of the geometric design and the other (the drawer) a paper and pencil. Emphasize that the drawer may not communicate in any way (no talking, no nudging) and that there are no wrong answers. When everyone has completed the exercise, spend as much time as possible talking about the experience, and identifying the difficulties with one-way communication. Finish the exercise by identifying the benefits of two-way communication.

Variation

Have the speaker describe in detail any item or setting unknown to the drawer (i.e.: the front of their home).

