

Communication and Conflict Resolution

ACTIVITY

Yes/No

Being able to say 'yes' or 'no' according to your wishes is a key part of appropriate and effective communication, especially during conflict. But how you say yes or no, and what it feels like, is also important from the viewpoint of being able to communicate effectively to others; saying 'yes' may seem strident, saying 'no' may seem negative, but they could also seem many different things depending on the issue and the stance taken by an individual. And it is important to have an awareness of the effect of saying 'yes' or 'no' on our own perceptions and feelings.

The exercise is done in pairs and in two parts.

Pairs sit or stand opposite each other. Each person asked to think of a conflict, conflicts, or issue they have been involved in recently – this can be in their personal, social, study, work, political or community life. They are given a couple of minutes to think and formulate the issue that they will say 'yes' or 'no' on.. **They do not share with the other person what 'their' conflict or issue is about at this stage.** They can use the same conflict for both parts of the exercise, or choose a different one to think about the second time.

In the exercise, first one person in the pair is asked to say 'yes' continuously – however they want to say it and with whatever gestures or body language they like – while the other person says 'no', again using what level or tone of voice they choose and with the body language they choose. No other spoken language is used apart from one person saying 'yes' and the other 'no'. Let the exercise run for perhaps a couple of minutes. Then call a halt.

The pair then switch 'yes' and 'no' roles; the person who said 'yes' now says 'no', and vice versa. Again let it run for a couple of minutes. As stated above, the issue the participants are thinking of can be the same as in the first part or different.

When the time is up, allow pairs to discuss the exercise for a while, perhaps six to ten minutes may be enough, you can judge from the level of interaction and checking with a few pairs whether they have finished. Each person can share as much about 'their' conflict or conflicts as they wish to divulge with the other person. What was or is their conflict(s) about? How heated has it been? Which side are they on? Why is that? How was it saying 'yes' or 'no' to the view they agree with? The view they disagree with? What were they aware of in their tone and body language? What did they feel about the other person playing the opposite role?

When you judge it time to come back into the plenary group, you can ask people to share important points from the exercise but with a) they should only share details on their own conflict (it is for their partner to share if they want); and in b) each person should talk about the issues involved for themselves.

Next, write 'Yes' and 'No' on top of a board or flip chart with a line down the middle. Firstly brainstorm a list of feelings associated with saying 'Yes', and then feelings associated with saying 'No'. Include the physical feelings of the body. Look at the list and compare the comments. How was it saying 'yes' or 'no' to the view they agree with? The view they disagree with? What were they aware of in their tone and body language? What did they feel about the other person playing the opposite role?

Win As Much as You Can (1 hour)

This is a very competitive activity that shows the impact of various conflict situations on groups where they need to make decisions to compete with other groups and on other instances co-operate with other rival groups to win as much as possible. This activity dramatizes the merits of both competitive and collaborative models within the context of intragroup and inter group relations.

Time / 60 Minutes

Tools/Items required :

Copies of the win as much as you can tally sheet for each team (see below) , pencils, paper

Directions and Set up :

4 Groups of four persons per group. Each group are seated far enough away from each other for strategy to be discussed confidentially, yet close enough for the cluster to interact. If you don't have even numbers, you can have teams of three, but groups should be matched in numbers wherever possible.

Rules:

I. The group is divided into teams within the group. If you have really large group, you can have multiple sets of 4 teams. The exercise works best with four teams. Each team will then be seated as in the illustration preceding. Each team is given a copy of the Tally Sheet and asked to study it. At the end of five minutes, participants are asked to share their understanding of the game with their "partners".

II. The facilitator reads the following directions aloud:

1. The title of this activity is "Win as Much as You Can." You are to keep that goal in mind throughout the experience.

2. There are three key rules:

- a. You are not to confer with other members of the whole group unless you are given specific permission to do so. This prohibition applies to non-verbal as well as verbal communication.
- b. Each team must agree upon a single choice for each round.
- c. You are to ensure that the other members of the whole group do not know your team's choice until you are instructed to reveal it.

3. There are ten rounds to this exercise. During each round you and your team will have two minutes to mark your choice for the round. Remember the rules. You may now take two minutes to mark your choice for round one.

a. (After a lapse of two minutes.) If you have not marked your choice, please raise your hand. (The facilitator should make sure that each quartet has completed the task before he proceeds, but he should keep the activity moving.)

b. Share your decision with the other members of your total group.

c. Mark your scorecard on the Tally Sheet for round one according to the payoff schedule.

d. Are there any questions about the scoring? (The response to all questions concerning the purpose of the activity should be, "The name of the game is "Win as Much as You Can.")

4. (The facilitator continues the game as follows:)

a. You have two minutes to mark your decision for round two.

b. Have any teams not finished?

c. Share and score.

5. (The game is continued by conducting rounds three and four like rounds one and two.)

6. Round five is a bonus round. You will note that the Tally Sheet indicates that all amounts won or lost on this round will be multiplied by three. Before I ask you to mark your choice for this round, I am going to allow you to discuss this with other members of the total group. After the group discussion, you and your partners will have two minutes to discuss your decision, as before. You may now have five minutes for group discussion. (Discussion is stopped after five minutes.) You and your partners now have two minutes to mark your decision for round five. Remember the rules are now in effect. (After lapse of two minutes.) Has any team not finished? Share and score.

7. (The facilitator conducts rounds six and seven like rounds one through four.)

8. (Round eight is conducted like round five, with the bonus value increased from three to five times par.)

9. (Round nine is conducted like rounds one through four and rounds six and seven.)
10. (Round ten is conducted like rounds five and eight, with the bonus value increased to ten times par.)
11. (The facilitator has the group compute its net score from the four quartet scores. Example +18, -21, +6, and +2 = +5. It is possible for each cluster to score +100, i.e. +25, +25, +25 and +25, if all four teams choose Y, the collaboration option, in each round.)

III. The facilitator opens the discussion of the process and its implications. The following key points should be raised.

1. Does the “You” in “Win as Much as You Can” mean you as a team or you as a whole group?
2. The effects of competition and collaboration should be considered on the organization.
3. How does the whole group’s net score compare to the possible net score of 100?
4. How does this experience relate to other group situations in your team and company?

IV. If there is time, the facilitator may wish to discuss the concept of win-lose, lose-lose and win-win strategies.

What's the point from this activity?:

Throughout this competitive activity , participants will go through a series of rounds/situations where they will need to make group decisions and reach consensus on actions that will impact their final result and in other instances they will have to negotiate the strategy with other groups as well collaboratively while still ensuring their group wins , which will some time force them to make some tough decisions whether to fulfill the agreements made with other groups or decide to put the interest of their team first which can also cause some conflict situations between the different teams that needs to be resolved as well throughout the activity.

WIN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN TALLY SHEET

Instructions: For ten successive rounds you and your partner(s) will chose either an X or a Y. Each rounds payoff depends on the pattern of choices made in your cluster.

Pay off Schedule

- 4 X's: Lose \$ 1.00 each
- 3 X's: Win \$1.00 each
- 1 Y : Lose \$3.00

2 X's: Win \$ 2.00 each
 2 Y's: Lose \$ 2.00 each
 1 X : Win \$ 3.00
 3 Y's: Lose \$ 1.00 each
 4 Y's: Win \$ 1.00 each

You are to confer with your partners in each round and make a joint decision. In rounds 5, 8 and 10 you and your partners may first confer with the other quartets in your total group before making your joint decision, as before.

Scorecard

	Round	Your Choice (Circle)		Group's pattern of Choice		Payoff	Balance
	1	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
	2	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
	3	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
	4	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
Bonus Round (Payoff X 3)	5	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
	6	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
	7	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
Bonus Round (Payoff X 5)	8	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
	9	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		
Bonus Round (Payoff X 10)	10	X	Y	<u> </u> x	<u> </u> Y		

Win As Much As You Can