

Event Packet: Communicating to Success

Welcome! This event focuses on communication styles. So much of relationship building is not only the content of what you say, but how you say it. This event has you reflecting and practicing healthy forms of communication to aid in your pair relationship building.

AGENDA	
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Welcome and Intro (10 min)	The facilitator welcomes pairs and reviews the event agenda.
Miscommunications (30 min)	As you eat and catch up with each other, you will learn and discuss ways that communication can go in the wrong direction.
Tower Building (30 min)	You will work as a group to construct a tower. Make sure to communicate as you complete the activity.
Tower Building Debrief (10 Min)	We will debrief the tower exercise and reflect on the activity.
Close Out (10 Min)	Important announcements and event dates will be shared out.

Miscommunication

Directions: While you eat, read and discuss the following ways that communication often goes in the wrong direction. After reading about each “miscommunication,” discuss the reflection questions with each other.

Interrupting

At times when communicating with another person, they might interrupt or cut you off before you are finished. People interrupt because they: 1. Get impatient with a speaker or think they know what they are going to say. 2. Are reminded of something they want to say and can't wait their turn. 3. Are more interested in their own thoughts and ideas than those of others.

Reflect: Have you ever tried to have a conversation with a person that continually interrupts you? How do you feel when this happens?

Advising

Although this is a mentoring program, giving advice should not be the main way of communication. By giving unasked for advice, a person immediately takes a position of superiority. Advice-giving says, “I know better than you do.” As a pair, there is no hierarchy and there is mutual learning happening. So be careful of saying “Well, if I were you...” or “I think you should...” or “Take my advice and...” too much when advice is not asked for.

Reflect: Since this program is for you two to talk and give advice, what is the best way to give advice or know when advice should be given?

Judging

Another form of communication that demonstrates superiority is making judging statements. This can particularly stop creativity and/or new ideas. Be careful of statements such as “I never liked...” or “That is so strange...”

Reflect: How can we make sure that we are honest with each other without judging each other?

Probing

Asking lots of questions tends to put the speaker on the defensive. More importantly, questions can lead the speaker away from what he or she wants to say. Asking clarifying questions is a good thing to do but, when taken to an extreme, leads to probing. For example, suppose you are trying to describe your day, but as soon as you mention the first thing that happened, you are asked, “What did you do that for? What happened? What did he say?” etc. This would probably cause you to shy away from continuing the conversation.

Reflect: How can we ask questions to help learn about each other and clarify but not distract each other?

Criticizing

Criticism can make the speaker feel wrong or unworthy. Few of us want to continue a conversation in which we are being criticized. When asked for, criticism or feedback is a way to grow. However, often we criticize a situation or action too quickly and without being asked.

Reflect: What is the best way to give feedback to each other? How can we make sure not to become defensive?

Tower Building

Today you're going to work together as a table to achieve a common goal. Using only the materials provided, you will collaborate to build **the tallest structure possible**. You will get two attempts to build the tower!

	Notes
What was easy about the tower building activity?	
What did you find frustrating during the tower building activity?	
How did you deal with your frustration during this activity?	
How do you typically handle challenges both emotionally and in terms of behavior/choices?	
List one specific thing your mentee/mentor did that you appreciate.	