



4-H Briefs

Fun ideas to help members and families explore 4-H projects

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Youth Development

Words Apart

FOCUS:

Communication- being able to communicate effectively by using voice patterns to share ideas.

Speaking- talking or verbal communication; conversation

Giving Feedback- responding to communications

Listening- hearing and interpreting verbal (spoken) communications

LEARNER OBJECTIVE:

To become aware of the influences on communication style, and to learn how to cope with restrictions on communication.

BACKGROUND:

We don't all communicate with one another in the same way. We each possess a different communication style. Communication styles are the way we communicate with others, including the use of non-verbal actions and other communication patterns.

MATERIALS:

- Group of 4 to 6 people
- Squares of colored paper:
 - 15 blue
 - 9 red
 - white

ACTIVITY:

Sit as a group around a table. Designate each member of the group as either blue or red alternately. Then place the 15 blue, 9 red, and 26 white squares in the center of the table.

The white squares are "asking" squares. Each time a member of the group asks a question, he or she takes a white square. When all the white squares are gone there can be no more "asking". Red and blue squares are "telling" squares. Each time you offer an opinion or make a statement you take a square. Members designated as red must take a red square and those designated blue must take a blue square each time they tell something.

As a group you will discuss a topic of your choice. When all the squares are gone the discussion ends. Then have each member of the group count how many white squares and then count how many blue or red squares they collected.

- If you collected more "asking" (white) squares than "telling" (blue or red) squares, you may have a verbally aggressive communication style.
- If you collected fewer "asking" (white) squares than "telling" (blue or red) squares, you may have a verbally submissive communication style.

DISCOVERY:

1. What differences were there in the amounts of time that a person spoke per square?
2. How did it feel to have your ability to talk restricted artificially by the squares? Like when all the white squares were gone and you couldn't ask any more questions or if all the red or blue squares were gone and you couldn't tell anything anymore.
3. Was it difficult to stay focused when all the "asking" or "telling" squares were gone?

PIECING IT TOGETHER:

- What did you learn about your communication style?
- What did you learn about the communication styles of others in the group?

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational service.

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma