



SESSION 3

COMMUNICATION

Learning Objectives

As a result of this training experience, each participant should be able to:

- ◆ Identify the three modes of communication.
- ◆ State the importance of effective communication.
- ◆ List obstacles to effective communication.
- ◆ List the ways to overcome effective communication barriers.
- ◆ Describe the importance of two-way communication.
- ◆ List whom we communicate with in our jobs as trainers.
- ◆ Show how we adapt our communication to fit the situation.

Methods

Talk, demonstration, brainstorming, buzz groups

Faculty Preparation

- ◆ Review “[Training Methods](#)” for tips on talk, demonstration, brain-storming and buzz groups.
- ◆ Review the handouts in “[Training Technology](#)” for tips on the use of overheads.

Materials

- ◆ Overhead projector and screen
- ◆ 3 sheets of 8½" × 11" paper for each participant (placed on the tables)
- ◆ Flipchart, chalkboard, or whiteboard
- ◆ Felt-tip markers
- ◆ [BSA 500 Answers sheet](#) for each steward

Overheads

- ◆ Aardvark description
- ◆ Aardvark picture
- ◆ “One-Way Communication” diagram
- ◆ Fly diagram
- ◆ BSA 500 Questions

Time

30 minutes

Introduction

Say:

Let’s play a game before we start this session. Please follow my directions:

Extend your right arm parallel to the floor.

Make a circle with your thumb and forefinger.

Bring your hand to your cheek, but say,

Now very firmly bring your hand to your chin.

Pause—most of the group will have done the same as you did, not as you said.

Look around but say nothing.

After about five seconds, a few in the group will realize their error and move their hands to their chins.

After a few more seconds, more people will join in the laughter, and your point can then be verbally reinforced: a leader’s actions may speak louder than his words.

Ask:

What did I just do?

Answers can range from “you tricked us” to “you showed us that actions speak louder than words.” You want participants to give answers related to communication.

That’s right, I communicated with you, and I also illustrated the point that as leaders and especially as trainers we need to be very careful of our actions because we sometimes communicate more effectively by what we do than by what we say.

This session is called *Communication*, and will deal with how we use the three forms of communication: verbal, visual, and written, in our jobs as trainers. We all communicate every day, so this is not a new skill for you to learn, but an opportunity for you to become more aware of how effectively you communicate.

Review the Learning Objectives.

Communication is defined as the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs. It is both sending and receiving information. Spoken, written, or visual information is not considered *communication* until the receiver receives it the way the sender expected it to be received.

Modes of Communication

Say:

Let's take a look at the different modes of communication. We'll start with written communication. What are some of the forms of written communication that we use as trainers?"

Look for participants to say things that involve words and graphics, like

- ◆ Flyers
- ◆ Posters
- ◆ Newsletters
- ◆ E-mail
- ◆ Web pages
- ◆ Magazines (especially *Boys' Life* and *Scouting*)
- ◆ Books
- ◆ Manuals

Say:

These are all examples of written communication. I have another example.

Display overhead 1, which describes an Aardvark.

Say:

Read this description and draw a picture of what these printed words tell you.

The body is stout, with arched back; the limbs are short and stout, armed with strong, blunt claws; the ears long; the tail thick at the base and tapering gradually. The elongated head is set on a short thick neck, and at the extremity of the snout is a disk in which the nostrils open. The mouth is small and tubular, furnished with a long extensile tongue. A large individual measured 6 feet 8 inches. In color it is pale sandy or yellow, the hair being scanty and allowing the skin to show.

Ask,

Do you know what animal this is?

(Aardvark)

Is the written word always enough to convey the message we want to give?

(No.)

Would it have been easier or harder if I had just read the passage to you?

(Harder because it would not be possible to refer back to it.)

What would have made this easier?

(A picture. Place the aardvark picture on the overhead.)

This leads us to non-verbal or visual communication. What does visual communication involve?

Look for participants to respond with:

- Pictures or graphics
- Body language.

Why are we concerned with body language? It is not something we usually use intentionally for communication, is it?

Body language is important because the people we are training use it unconsciously. So we need to be able to interpret what they are saying. We also need to be aware of what we are unconsciously saying. Remember our opening exercise where I said one thing and did another? How many of you did what I did instead of what I said? Might this cause problems for us as trainers if we are not aware of it?

The third mode is verbal communication. What formats can this take?

Look for participants to respond with:

- ◆ Face-to-face (one-on-one, small group, large group)
- ◆ Telephone (one-on-one usually, group conference call)
- ◆ Video (In discussing video, be sure to point out that the effectiveness of the video is related to its appropriateness for the skill or information being communicated as well as its appropriateness for the anticipated audience.)

We've discussed the three modes of communication. Which one is best?

Allow only a very brief discussion here. The final answer should be that none of them is best; they each have uses for different situations at different times in different circumstances.

Let's do another exercise. Each one of you needs two sheets of plain paper from the stack on your table, and a pencil or pen. I also need one of you as a volunteer.

Give the volunteer the "One Way Communication" diagram. He or she will stand so no eye contact is possible. The group should not be able to see the diagram.

Give these instructions:

You are to draw a figure on your paper following the directions given by the volunteer. Only verbal communication is allowed; no gestures or hand signals, and no questions from the group.

Note: it is not necessary to go through the entire figure, several shapes will probably be enough to get the idea across.)

When completed, project the diagram on the overhead and ask,

Are your drawings at all like this one?

How many got confused and quit listening?

Why was it difficult to follow?

Repeat the exercise with the same diagram allowing full, two-way communication.

What happened the second time that made the task easier?

(Two-way communication.)

That's right. Our communication became two-way. There was feedback, repetition, questions, gestures, etc., including body language.

Without feedback, we have no way of knowing whether or not the message we are communicating is being received the way we intend it to be received.

Barriers to Communication

Say:

Look at this diagram. Can you read what this says?

Briefly project the "Fly" overhead. Usually 10 to 15 percent of the participants will have seen the diagram before or will detect the word "fly" quickly. Acknowledge those people immediately. Then project the image again and ask:

The rest of you can't see the word FLY? If you still can't see it, try looking at the *white space* rather than the black markings. Many children see the word "fly" immediately. Why, then, do adults experience difficulty in seeing it as quickly?

We have learned to read black print on white paper. Preconceived notions are one of the barriers that can cause problems in interpersonal communication.

What are some other barriers?

Some of the barriers that can be determined from this discussion are:

- ◆ Preconceived notions (see above)
- ◆ Physical distractions: Noise, temperature, comfort (hard chairs, etc.), not enough or too much space, lighting
- ◆ Past experience
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Heritage, ethnic background
- ◆ Geographical location (region of country or rural/city)
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Time in Scouting
- ◆ Language: English as a second language, vocabulary, speed of speaking, level of language ability, use of acronyms or code words

- ◆ Disabilities: Sight (including color blindness), hearing, other physical problems
- ◆ Learning problems (dyslexia, ADD, processing impairments, perceptual difficulties)

Note: Depending on the group and the amount of available time, you may want to briefly discuss some of the barriers, such as gender. Don't get into male/female issues, but rather point out the different perspectives each has, even regarding how body language is "read."

What are some ways we can deal with or overcome barriers such as the ones we discussed?

This is by nature an open-ended discussion, but some ideas that could come from it are:

- ◆ Be aware of and try to control physical distractions
- ◆ Use a sign language interpreter
- ◆ Use a foreign language interpreter
- ◆ Have bilingual trainers available
- ◆ Speak clearly, and loud enough for conditions
- ◆ Use common vocabulary
- ◆ Avoid acronyms—don't use three letter abbreviations (TLA's)
- ◆ Use a variety of styles
- ◆ Use videotapes with closed captioning
- ◆ Be aware of and adapt to others' styles
- ◆ Find out about any course participants' physical communication barriers before they attend your course and make appropriate arrangements to mitigate their effect.

So, if you know with whom you are dealing, you can take steps to make sure that the people you are trying to communicate with will be able to understand what you are saying to them.

What are some of the ways we can enhance communication?

- ◆ Take notes.
- ◆ Repeat what is said (both the speaker and the listener can repeat).
- ◆ Ask questions (speaker and listener).
- ◆ Use drawings, pictures, examples.
- ◆ Ask for feedback.

- ◆ Stay flexible and open.
- ◆ Don't "kill the messenger."
- ◆ Be the model for what you want—your body speaks whether you are aware of it or not.

Tell each team that they are to pretend they are the course director at a training conference. Then give each team a different group/person (such as: participants, staff, district/council professionals, council office staff, organization providing facilities, vendors of lunch or supplies) that they, as the course director, would communicate with before the start of the training conference. Each team is to determine:

- ◆ What style of communication would be the most effective to use with the group/person each team was given?
- ◆ What are some of the barriers to be aware of when communicating with that group/person?

Allow the teams five minutes for discussion. Then the teams should present *brief* reports back to the entire group, focusing on the differences a course director might encounter as he or she communicates with different groups/people.

There should be some lively discussion here, because there are no correct answers. The idea is to get participants thinking about how to effectively communicate with a variety of people in different positions

Summary

End this session with,

You have discussed and observed the three modes of communication: written, verbal, and visual. You have explored some of the barriers to communication you encounter in your roles as trainers. The most important aspect of communication that trainers need to remember is that they are constantly modeling this skill. As you go about your jobs, you must be constantly aware of the message you are giving. Is it the one you intend to give?

BSA 500 Game

Place the BSA 500 questions transparency for this session on the overhead projector, but do not turn the projector on. Announce that when the questions appear on the screen, each team will have exactly one minute to answer as many of the questions as they possibly can. The answers are to be given to the race steward at each table by the team's crew chief.

Turn the overhead projector on. After exactly 60 seconds turn the projector off, and announce that time has expired. After the stewards have determined the number of correct answers for each team, allow a little time for the crew chiefs to move their team's racecar along the track.

Pizzazz

Add a song, stunt, run-on, or other morale feature to lead into the next session.

To continue, scroll down for session materials, or follow one of these links:

[Session 4:
Characteristics of Trainers](#)

[Contents](#)

COMMUNICATION

BSA 500 ANSWERS

1. What are the three modes of communication?

- ◆ Written
- ◆ Visual
- ◆ Verbal

2. What are three barriers to communication?

- ◆ Physical distraction
- ◆ Past experience
- ◆ Language
- ◆ Physical disabilities
- ◆ Preconceived notions

3. What are three ways to enhance communication?

- ◆ Take notes
- ◆ Repeat what is said (speaker can repeat and listener can repeat)
- ◆ Ask questions (speaker and listener)
- ◆ Use diagrams, pictures, examples
- ◆ Ask for feedback
- ◆ Stay flexible and open
- ◆ Don't "kill the messenger"
- ◆ Model what you want (remember, your body speaks)

4. What is the most important aspect of communication for trainers to remember?

That they are constantly modeling this skill

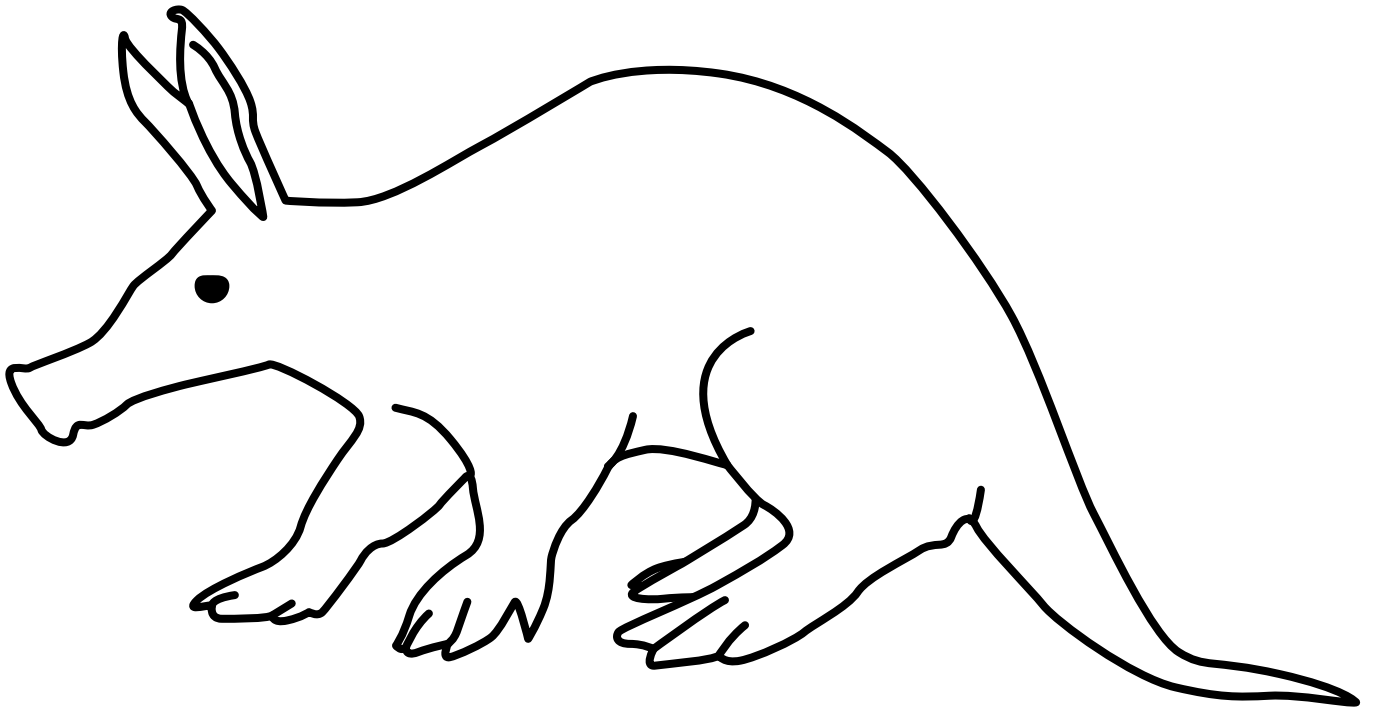
The body is stout, with arched back; the limbs are short and stout, armed with strong, blunt claws; the ears long; the tail thick at the base and tapering gradually.

The elongated head is set on a short thick neck, and at the extremity of the snout is a disk in which the nostrils open.

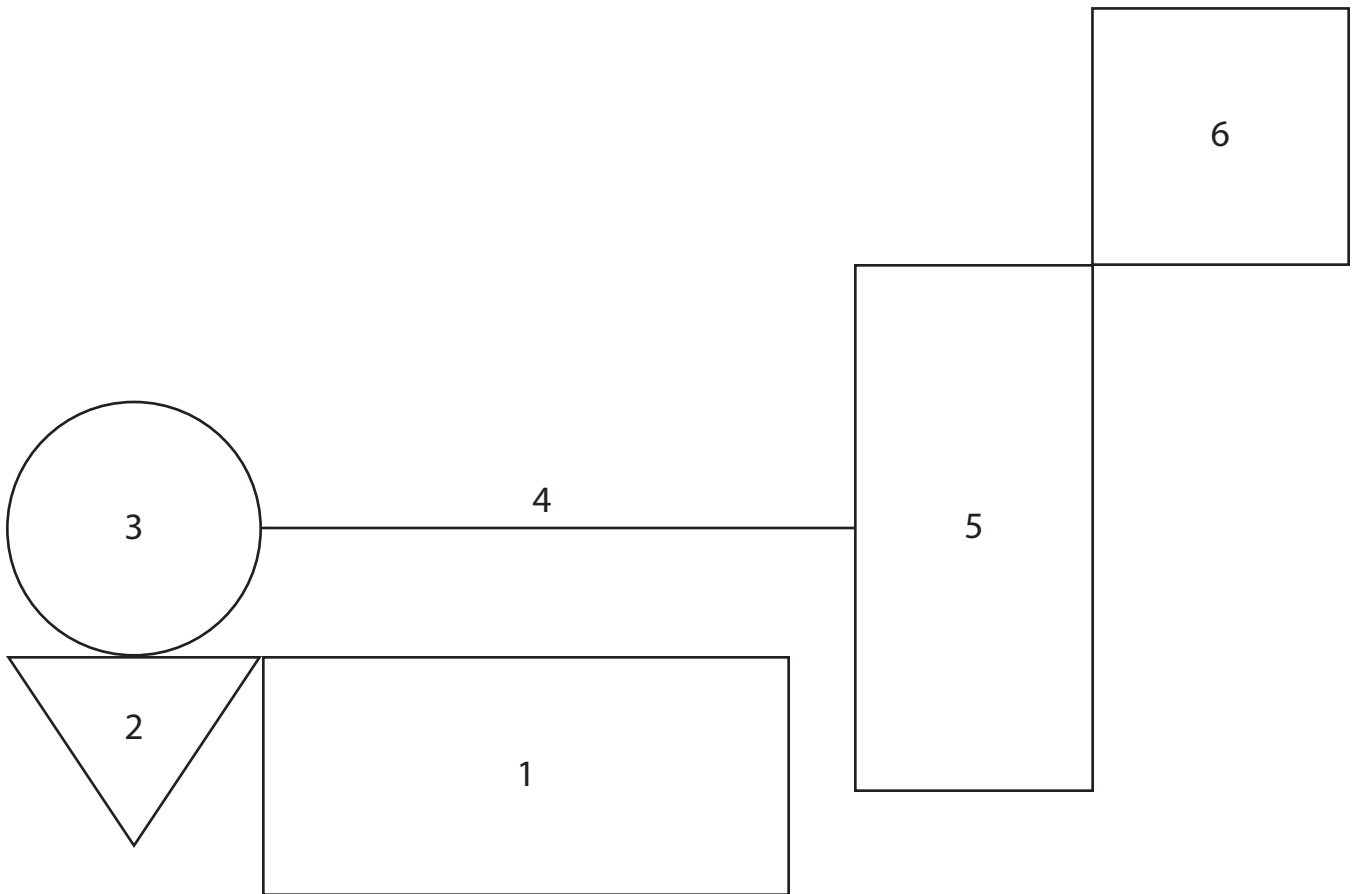
The mouth is small and tubular, furnished with a long extensile tongue.

A large individual measures 6 feet 8 inches. In color it is pale sandy or yellow, the hair being scanty and allowing the skin to show.

AARDVARK



ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION DIAGRAM



COMMUNICATION

BSA 500 Questions

What are the three modes of communications?

What are three barriers to communications?

What are three ways to enhance communications?

What is the most important aspect of communication for trainers to remember?