

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS



**Time Required:** 30-45 minutes

**Content Standards:** (AA.S.9) Students will understand safety and survival skills and apply coping strategies.

**Indicators (Students will...):** AA.PSD.12.9.01 Learn techniques for managing conflict to make safe, emotionally healthy choices.

**GOAL:** Students will use communication skills to work cooperatively.

## Activity Statements:

1. Students will use communication skills to resolve conflicts in a nonviolent manner.
2. Students will use role play to practice solving conflicts.

## Materials:

Handout 1 *Active Listening*

Handout 2 *Conflict Observation Sheet*

Handout 3 *I Messages*

Handout 4 *Conflict Resolution Skills*

Teacher Resource 1 *Guidelines for Facilitating Role Plays*

Teacher resource 2 *Role Play Situations*

## Procedures and Discussion:

1. Distribute "Active Listening" and work through the sheet with students. Highlight or otherwise emphasize the exact words that could be used in their role play situations, such as "I'm still not sure I understand why that made you so upset. Could you explain again?" Explain that they will be doing role play during this class and they should be sure to include active listening and communication skills in their actions.
2. Review "Guidelines for Facilitating Role Plays" with the students. Note the main points on the chalkboard or overhead projector.
3. Ask for two volunteers to act out the first role play. Remind them to follow the guidelines listed and use active listening techniques.
  - Role Play #1: You are a student. You told a friend in confidence about someone you'd like to go out with. Over the next few days, several people make remarks

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to you about it. The next time you're alone with your friend, you talk about what happened. Role play the conversation.

4. Distribute "Conflict Observation Sheet" and discuss the role play situation just performed. Emphasize those active listening skills that the participants correctly used.
5. Distribute "'I' Messages" and explain the first paragraph. Warn them against using "put-downs." After reading the rest of the examples, ask for two volunteers to role play the next situation using active listening skills and "I" messages. Take a minute to confer privately and decide how they will choose to carry out the situation.
  - Role Play #2: You are a student. You took an aisle seat at the assembly, then went to get a drink of water, leaving your books in the seat. You come back to find that another student has put your books in the aisle and taken your seat. What do you do?
6. Refer back to "Conflict Observation Sheet" and discuss appropriate questions, pointing out the new technique used ("I" messages) and the one previously learned (active listening skills).
7. Divide the class into groups of no more than four each. Distribute one of the role play situations found on "Role Play Situations" (cut them apart prior to class). Have each group discuss how best to resolve the conflict and decide who will act out the situation. Remind them to include both techniques: active listening and "I" messages.
8. Let each group role play a situation for the class. Using the "Conflict Observation Sheet," discuss the role plays, pointing out appropriate responses and the use of the two techniques.
9. Ask students to list situations that cause conflict between groups. Give examples that might cause arguments, aggressions, or violent behavior. Discuss ways these situations may be handled in a nonviolent way. Include "I" messages and active listening skills in your discussion.

*Notes: This lesson contains more material than can be done in a 50 minute period; rather than cut beneficial activities, it was determined to leave the decision of pacing up to the teacher, who is in the best position to determine the needs of her/his students. This lesson is based on the Sunburst Conflict Resolution materials. The model is based on the belief that cooperation is the underlying framework for conflict resolution and must be experienced, not just taught, to be understood and internalized.*

## **Additional Resources:**

Conflict Resolution: [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_81.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm)

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