Lesson Goals

- Discuss different ways in which we communicate (spoken word, written word, body language)
- Explore how misunderstandings can occur in communication
- Practice strategies for effective communication (active listener and being able to get your message across)
- Role play: practice assertive responses to different scenarios
- Role play: practice refusal skills - ways to refuse and still be cool
- Summarize important take-aways
- "Ticket-to-Leave" anonymous questions in question box. Questions answered from previous lesson.

SEL Skills
Self-awareness
Social-awareness
Relationships Skills

Terms Used
Passive Communication
Aggressive Communication
Assertive Communication
Active Listener

Materials: Whiteboard/Smartboard or Poster Paper, Anonymous Question Box, Index Cards or Small Pieces of Paper, and Student Packets with Handouts
Activity 1: Anonymous Questions

The purpose of this activity is to provide students with a way to ask those questions that they might feel uncomfortable asking out loud in class.

Address students’ questions in Anonymous Question Box. Give students a new question to answer if they don’t have one about the class material, and remind students to place their anonymous questions in the box as they leave the classroom.

Activity 2: Introduce Communication

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the different ways in which we communicate.

Some prompts to introduce the lesson

What are some ways in which people communicate?
• Spoken Word (e.g., talking in person, on the phone)
• Written Word (e.g., e-mail, text messages, letters, cards, magazine articles)
• Body Language (e.g., nonverbal body and facial expressions)

What does effective communication have to do with a unit on healthy relationships?
• Learn how to establish healthy relationships with family, friends, romantic partners, acquaintances
• Learn how to stand up to peer pressure and ask for help when needed
Activity 3: Exploring how Misunderstandings Can Occur

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand some ways in which misunderstandings can occur in conversations.

Directions: Ask students to tell a partner a story about a time they felt misunderstood in a conversation. It could be a conversation that you had with a friend or with an adult/parent-guardian-teacher. Have students identify what their stories have in common about why the misunderstanding happened (e.g., the other person wasn't listening, they were texting, etc.). Ask students to share the common themes with the class.

Prompts for Discussion:

1. Do your stories have anything in common about why the misunderstandings happened?

2. Did you continue the conversation with the person or end the conversation in frustration?

One-way communication vs. two-way communication: Oftentimes, misunderstandings and hurt feelings occur in e-mails and other text media because of the absence of tone and body language. Students should always consider how one-way communication can be confusing and lead to misunderstandings. Which ways of communication are most effective for important discussions?

One-way communication works in only one direction
- Letter
- E-mail
- Text Message
- Information relayed through a third party

Two-way communication goes back and forth between two people
- Face-to-Face conversation
- Phone call
- Instant messenger
- Replying to e-mails or text messages
Activity 4: Becoming an Active Listener

~ The purpose of this activity is to have students practice active listening skills.

Ask a student to tell you a story about something he/she did over the weekend. Demonstrate poor listening skills (e.g., talking to other students, checking e-mail, and looking away from the speaker), and then ask students what they saw. Ask students for suggestions on becoming a better listener. After hearing their responses, share BECOMING AN ACTIVE LISTENER list and discuss the process questions about effective communication.

Becoming an Active Listener
• Stop Talking
• Show you are interested
  • Make comfortable eye contact
  • Use respectful body language
  • Keep a relaxed posture
  • Nod in agreement
• Remove distractions (ipod, TV, computer)
• Empathize: how might the other person be feeling?
• Be open-minded

Discussion Questions:
How can active listening lead to effective communication?

How can active listening reduce misunderstandings?

How does active listening connect to social awareness?
Activity 5: Getting your Message Across

The purpose of this activity is to help students practice strategies for effective communication.

Getting Your Message Across
• Check in with your feelings (it’s OK to name your feelings)
• Identify what you want to say (think before you speak)
• Check in with your body language before you start to speak
• Pick the appropriate time and setting
• You may have to repeat yourself or consider using a different approach

Discussion Questions:

How do people communicate messages without speaking?

In what ways can nonverbal communication get your message across?

In what ways can nonverbal communication reduce misunderstandings?

Why can it get confusing to understand someone’s meaning over e-mail or text-messaging?
Activity 6: Assertive Communication

~ The purpose of this activity is to help students practice strategies for assertive communication and to understand the communicator’s role in sending a message that is clearly understood by the receiver.

Introduce assertive communication, the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest, and direct way. Explain that assertive communication is the middle ground between aggressive communication and passive communication.

Three types of Communication

Passive Communication: Giving in and saying “yes” when you are not sure, feel confused, or really don’t want to say yes. Not asking for what you want. Acting this way in order to feel liked, to be nice, or to avoid hurting another person’s feelings.

Aggressive Communication: Trying to get your own way (not consciously) by showing the anger, frustration, or fear you feel in reaction to a situation or something someone says. Reacting strongly, often by name-calling, without regard to how it might hurt or insult another person; often getting into a fight (verbal or physical).

Assertive Communication: Giving people an honest answer about what you want and don’t want. Making sure you are speaking for yourself and your feelings. This includes asking for time when you feel confused and are not sure what you want. It also includes not using other people and not letting yourself be used.

Examples: A friend borrows your favorite DVD and then loses it.

Passive Response: “Oh, that’s OK.”
(example of a person giving in without expressing his or her own feelings or needs).

Aggressive Response: “Why do you always mess things up? I am never lending you anything again?” May also include name calling. (example of a person speaking before thinking and therefore attacks in a hostile tone)

Assertive Response: “I feel upset when you lose my belongings because they are really important to me. Could you please replace if for me this week?”
Elicit examples from students for each form of communication below.

Aggressive Communication:
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Passive Communication:
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Assertive Communication:
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

**Being assertive means:**

• Standing up straight

• Looking directly at the person or group who is pressuring you

• Speaking in a firm voice

• Saying what you have to say quickly while being polite

• Choosing words well—For instance, “I don’t want to” as opposed to “I can’t.”

An important way to help students formulate assertive responses is to practice using “I” statements.

Step 1: “I feel...”

Step 2: “when you...”

Step 3: “because...”
Activity 7: Assertive Response Scenarios

~ The purpose of this activity is to practice assertive responses to different scenarios.

Read a scenario from the list of scenarios below. Model a passive response and an aggressive response. Have students prompt you until you give an assertive response. Pick a few additional scenarios. Play the role of the “problem person” and have students react to you. Remind students to use the “Getting Your Message Across” steps to communicate effectively. Ask students to work on a few of the remaining scenarios with a partner.

Getting Your Message Across

• Check in with your feelings (it’s OK to name your feelings)
• Identify what you want to say (think before you speak)
• Check in with your body language before you start to speak
• Pick the appropriate time and setting
• You may have to repeat yourself or consider using a different approach

1. Someone has asked to use your MP3 player, but they never returned the last thing you lent them.

2. Someone comes over to tell you something that is really important to them, but you are in the middle of studying for an important test.

3. You are next in line at a store, and the attendant overlooks you and starts to help the customer behind you.

4. The person at the checkout counter did not give you the right amount of change back.

5. Someone offers you something that you don’t want, but they insist that you take it.

6. Your friend continually teases you about your height, weight, clothing, or appearance.

7. Your friend goes “on-line/instant message” pretending to be you and says insulting things about other people, trying to figure out who might agree or say something negative.

8. Your friend spreads a rumor (or reveals a secret) around school about you.

9. You find out one of your closest friends is planning to hook up with a person you have secretly had a crush on for several months.
10. Your friend constantly imitates what you do, say, or wear.

11. You and your friend do a project together, but you wind up doing most of the work.

12. A friend is nice to you in private (one on one), but different with other people around.
Activity 8: Ways to Refuse

The purpose of this activity is to have students practice assertive ways to refuse.

Distribute (or put up on the white board) the list of Ways to Refuse and Still Be Cool, and have students take turns reading the examples. Have the students put stars next to examples that they have already used, and circle one or two examples that they are willing to actively attempt before the next class. Ask students if they have alternative ideas to add to the list. Encourage students to add those suggestions that they like to their list.

Ways to Refuse and Still Be Cool

• You can say “no” without making an excuse
• Speak for yourself - don’t try to tell someone else what they think or feel
• Speak from your heart and honor your values
• Be clear - your words and tone should be consistent
• Repeat the message if you need to
• Suggest doing something else - an alternative activity idea
• Let the other person know if you feel disrespected
• Be willing to accept rejection
• Be assertive, not aggressive
• Avoid physical contact, and leave the situation if you need to
• Keep a serious face and use assertive body language

Process Questions
1) What is one way to refuse that you can picture yourself using?
2) Which SEL skills are you using when practicing refusal skills?
Ways to Refuse and Still Be Cool

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• Speak for yourself - don’t try to tell someone else what they think or feel
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• Keep a serious face and use assertive body language
Activity 9: Summary of Important Take Aways

~ The purpose of this activity is to give students an opportunity to recall some key points that they learned from this class.

Have students summarize
• Something interesting that I learned form this class
• Something I want to make sure I remember from this class
• A question I have after participating in this class