

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION: KINESICS & BODY LANGUAGE

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SUMMARY:	While you cannot control other’s behavior, you can control yourself in relation to others in ways that can impact your relationship and interaction. Understanding body language and practicing how to interpret other’s and control your own are valuable skills. These games explore non-verbal communication and introduce the concept of kinesics (posture, facial expressions, gestures, etc.).
TOPIC(S):	Communication Skills, Leadership Development, Non-verbal Communication, Mental Health
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will explore non-verbal communication through games and discussing kinesics (posture, facial expressions, gestures, etc.).
AUDIENCE:	8-30 staff members
TIMING:	10-30 minutes (can be divided into 3 separate exercises)
MATERIALS:	<i>Optional:</i> Flipchart paper, markers

OPENING QUOTE

Consider writing this on a poster board and asking for interpretations, how this is relevant in camp and staff lives:
“The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said.” -Peter F. Drucker

READING BODY LANGUAGE & CREATING TENSION: EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE EXERCISE

Ask participants to spread themselves out randomly around the room/space. Next, ask participants to, without talking, pick two other people in the room and keep them in their heads.

Then explain that the goal for each person is to now form an equilateral triangle between themselves and the two people they have chosen – no other rules apply other than not being able to talk (i.e. the Participants can put their arms out and point at the two people they’re trying to triangulate on – but you may not want to tell them this example). You may choose to allow only a specific time, or to let it go uninterrupted. Say “GO!,” and start the stopwatch if you wish and see how long it takes until the group stops moving.

Lead a reflection discussion – here are some possible questions:

- How did it feel to chase after people?
- What was the tension like, if any, feeling like you all had a similar but very different/conflicting goal?
- In what ways did you, or might you have, picked up on others’ signals?

There are rules to this exercise, but they are simple. The rule is to make a triangle, which everyone follows. Therefore, this works when: 1) Rules (more like principles) are simple and understood by all, and 2) Everyone tries to adhere to these principles.



INTRODUCTION TO KINESICS

Define Kinesics: body movements and gestures regarded as a form of nonverbal communication. This can include posture and motion.

Discuss:

- How can your behavior serve to escalate or de-escalate a given situation?
- Art of Noticing: If applicable, recall previous exercise on personal space (proxemics) or what you already know about body language. What might you see when someone “gets too close”?
 - Examples: blushing, nervous laughter, flicking fingers, breaking eye contact, increased heavy breathing, etc.
- Did you know different cultures have different expectations around kinesics, like eye contact? (In some cultures, eye contact can be a sign of competitiveness; others lower eye contact as a sign of respect, etc.)

EMOTIONAL TABLEAU CHARADES

- Divide the group into two teams. Each team will alternate turns, and topics for charades will all be feelings.
 - Examples: Angry, Happy, Sad, Anxious, Guilty, Regret, Surprise, Disgust, Fear, Embarrassed, Shy, Bored, etc. (See emotions chart below for more examples.)
 - You can either whisper these words, or you can write them down ahead of time and have staff to pick from a hat.
- 2-3 people go up in front of their team at a time. When in front of the group, they cannot draw, talk, or move – they must create a freeze-frame tableau.