

One-Way vs Two-Way Communication

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Have the group participants pair up with someone they do not know. Give each pair one blindfold, scarf, or bandana (you can usually get cheap bandanas from a hobby store).
2. Ask all participants to move to the opposite side of the room from their chairs.
3. Assign one member of the pair to be an “A” and the other one to be a “B.”
4. Tell the “B’s” to help place the blindfold on the “A’s.”
5. Instruct the “B’s” that their job will be to take their partner and lead him or her back to “B’s” chair. The “B’s” should hold their partner’s arm for safety but should not guide them physically. Rather, the “B’s” must use verbal commands like “walk forward five feet”; “take two steps sideways”; “walk backwards two steps,” and so on.
6. During this whole process “A’s” may not say anything! They may not ask questions or give any feedback.
7. Reinforce the need for safety.
8. Once all members have made it back to their seats, repeat the whole exercise with two changes: first, “B’s” should be blindfolded and guided to “A’s” chair and second, *partners can talk to each other and engage in two way communication throughout the whole process.*

Title: One-Way vs Two-Way Communication

Group Size: 10 to 50+; must be even numbered group as they will work in pairs

Time Needed: 20 to 30 minutes depending on group size

Goal: To provide a fun interactive way to experience the difference between one-way and two-way communication

Audience: Couples, Parents, Singles, Teens, Children

Special Considerations: If anyone is afraid to be blindfolded they do not have to participate in this activity. There also may be cultural concerns about blindfolding. This activity needs some advance planning and a site visit is probably in order so you can determine if the activity will take place inside the room or outside. With highly competitive groups this can get a little rowdy.

Resources Needed:

- ✓ Blindfolds

Tips for Discussion and Processing

This activity can be discussed in many ways. The first conversation can be around how “A” had to *risk* being blindfolded, led by someone they did not know, and *trust* “B” to take care of them (key points should be risk-taking and trust). The second is to discuss “two-way” communications and how the activity went much faster and more smoothly when both members of the pair could speak. This discussion should highlight the importance and effectiveness of two-way communication.