Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Effective and Respectful Communication with Children and Youth (Part I)

Trainer:

Date:
By the end of the session, participants will:

- Strengthen awareness and use of nonverbal communication
- Understand and improve skills in active listening
- Review and practice simple strategies to use to build effective and respectful communication with children/youth.
Nonverbal Communication

An important skill that allows you to:

- Accurately “read” children and youth, including unspoken messages they are sending
- Respond with cues that show you understand, notice, and care
- Create trust in relationships by sending signals that reinforce your words
Nonverbal Communication Strategies

- Pay attention
- Use good eye contact
- Check for inconsistencies
- Concentrate on your tone of voice when speaking
- Look at nonverbal communication skills together, as a group
Quiz! Nonverbal Communication

Instructions:
1. Turn to the person on your right. In pairs, work together to complete the quiz.
2. Take 5 minutes to get as far as you can.
3. Note your questions or explanations.
Characteristics of Empathetic Listeners

As an empathetic listener, you:

- Consider the other person
- Try to be non-defensive
- Understand that you can’t know what it is like for another person
- Desire to listen, not criticize
Active Listening...

- Is attentive; involves both listening and responding
- Uses nonverbal communication
- May include repeating what was said to make sure you are hearing correctly
- Validates and empathizes
- Withholds judgment and advice
- Helps avoid misunderstandings
Strategies for Active Listening

- Give the child/youth your undivided attention. Listen fully.
- Restate content.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Identify the feeling and empathize.
Exercise: Active Listening Practice

Instructions:
1. Get together into groups of 3.
2. Choose who will be the Speaker, the Listener, and the Observer for the first round.
3. Speaker: talk to the Listener for a 4-5 minutes. Observer: watch the interaction.
4. After, all 3 discuss what worked/did not work for 2-3 minutes.
5. Change roles 2 more times so each of you has a chance to try the Speaker, Listener and Observer role.
Self Reflection: Active Listening Skills

How are your skills?

What ideas do you have to improve your skills?
The most precious gift we can offer anyone is our attention.

Thich Nhat Hanh