



Day Six: Communicating—Part 6: Communicating with Adults

Time Allowed

30 Minutes

Teaching Format

Troop presentation

Learning Objectives

As a result of this session, participants will be able to do the following:

1. Recognize the importance of effectively communicating with adults.
2. Understand and demonstrate the five-step process for communicating with adults.
3. Understand the importance of developing your individual communication style.
4. Understand that communicating effectively takes time and practice.

Materials Needed

- Visual aid(s) developed by presenter
- Computer
- LCD projector and screen
- Appropriate sound system for presentation venue

Recommended Presenter

NYLT staff member

Recommended Location

Troop assembly area

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Note: Guide participants to locate the Participant Notes sheet for this session in the Participant Notebook. Encourage them to be taking note of key words, key points, and their top three takeaways from the session.

Effective Communication with Adults (10 min)

Ask participants to describe some of their experiences in communicating with adults. Their answers may include the following:

- Adults don't want to have fun.
- Adults don't like to take risks.
- Adults have different experiences.

- Adults don't trust us.
- Adults need to be in charge.
- Adults may have a bias against letting youth fully lead.
- Adults don't understand us.
- Adults don't speak our language

There is no need to write their answers down, but you should respond to and reinforce the answers. After getting 4–5 answers, ask the participants to explain how communicating with adults is different than communicating with peers? Answers may include the following:

- Not communicating as equals (Teacher – Child, Parent – Child, Superior – Subordinate, etc.)
- Adults usually prefer clear, concise, and to-the-point discussions, where peers are often happy just to be having a conversation.
- Adults may not appreciate a casual or informal relationship.
- Adults tend to not use the same slang or jargon youth will use among peers.

The same tools that work well for communicating with peers are normally effective when communicating with adults. Perhaps they are even more important.

Communicating well with adults may require you to adjust how you deliver a message. Refer to the challenges to effective communication with adults that the participants just described. To overcome those challenges youth can take a more deliberate approach to structuring and delivering the message.

Let's say you go home after this course full of great ideas for making your unit better. You want to talk with your leader about changes you want to help make in the unit. No matter what message you want to share, and no matter who your audience is, here is a five-step process almost certain to succeed:

1. Here is the reason I am asking for some of your time.
2. Let me share an idea with you.
3. Let me summarize the situation for you. (Put your idea in the context of who, what, when, where, why, and how.)
4. Reinforce the benefits.
 - "Here's why it makes sense."
 - "Here's how it helps us reach our goals."
 - "Here's how it helps us complete an action plan."
 - "Here's what's in it for you."
5. Let's discuss the steps to turn this idea into action.

Exercise in Communicating with Adults (15 min)

Briefly set up this exercise by telling participants that they will break into pairs and role play an NYLT graduate and their unit leader using the five-step method.

Have one participant be the sender who creates a message using the five steps. The listener will pretend they are the adult leader of the sender's home unit.



Allow two minutes to write a message using the five steps, and two minutes per Scout for each to deliver their message to the “adult leader,” for a total of six minutes. Then, take four minutes for the pairs to give each other constructive feedback.

Ask participants to share some of their experiences from their practice of presenting ideas to adult leaders. What went well? What was not effective? How can they use the skills of effective communication to better share their ideas?

Pulling Everything Together: Communicating Well is Communicating Effectively (5 min)

Summarize and conclude the six-part Communicating lesson.

Pulling all of the concepts together, good communicators achieve effective communication. What does “effective communication” mean? It means the sender lands the message with the receiver in the intended manner to achieve the desired result. How complete was the message? Did the message have all of the necessary ingredients? Did the message have the right tone? How well did the sender deliver the message? Was the receiver ready to receive the message?

There is no single way to achieve effectiveness. Further, senders need to develop their skills to adjust their message and their delivery depending on the receiver(s). Some Senders are effective with some receivers, but not others. You want to develop your skills to achieve effectiveness with a wide variety of receivers.

As a sender, continue to identify communicators who you admire and who you would like to model. As a receiver, do you find it easier to receive the messages of some senders over others? Give thought to how you can change your approach to listening to better receive the messages of some senders.

Your communication style is your personal approach (or personal brand) that you use to achieve effective communication. Your style can include any of the following: how loud you speak, how quickly you speak, how you make eye contact with your receivers, what you wear, where you place yourself in relation to your receivers, whether you use communication aids, whether you use emotion, how you formulate your message, and so on.

Finding and developing your style takes practice. You also need to learn to adapt your style to different communication situations.

There are many other aspects of communication to learn about and practice. Focus on the basics we've talked about during this course, and observe whether you feel your messages are more effective. Also think about whether you are a better receiver.

As you develop your communication style, explore how storytelling can increase the effectiveness of your messages. You can also practice bringing appropriate humor into your messages (remember, humor should almost always be “general” or directed toward yourself; humor directed at others seldom lands well).

You should also be aware of your biases and how it can impact your ability to effectively communicate. Everyone has biases (it's part of being human); the current advice is to develop an awareness of your biases so that you can manage them. If you are unaware of

(oblivious to) your biases, you will not be as effective as a sender, and your messages may not be as well received as possible by your receivers.

Remind participants to take a moment to ensure they have noted their top three takeaways in their Participant Notes for this session.