

THE EYES HAVE IT

Practice nonverbal communication

Materials: Worksheets, pencils, timer
Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss with the Group.

While what we say is important, our body language also tells a story.

What is body language? It's the nonverbal ways we express ourselves using our bodies, like our movements, facial expressions and posture. Nonverbal skills help us understand others, and help others understand us.

We can speak loudly with our faces — especially our eyes. When you look a person in the eyes, you show you care and are listening. When you don't make eye contact, you miss a lot of what the other person is communicating.

Let's practice two different exercises. Everybody find a partner. Choose who is Partner 1 and who is Partner 2. For each exercise, we'll set the timer for 2 minutes.

EXERCISE ONE

Partner 1 will talk about their favorite thing to do. Partner 2 will look at Partner 1. Do not take your eyes off your partner. Remember, when we look at our partner, we are showing we care and are listening.

(Set the timer for 2 minutes.)

On your worksheet, Partner 1 will write down how this made them feel.

My partner looking at me made me feel:

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.....

Let's switch places. Now, Partner 2 will talk about their favorite thing to do. Partner 1 will look at Partner 2. Do not take your eyes off your partner. Remember, when we look at our partner, we are showing we care and are listening.

(Set the timer for 2 minutes.)

On your worksheet, Partner 2 will write down how this made them feel.

My partner looking at me made me feel:

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EXERCISE TWO

Partner 1 will talk about their favorite food. Partner 2 will ignore and not look at Partner 1.

(Set the timer for 2 minutes.)

On your worksheet, Partner 1 will write down how this made them feel.

My partner ignoring and not looking at me made me feel:

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Let's switch places. Now, Partner 2 will talk about their favorite food. Partner 1 will ignore and not look at Partner 2.

(Set the timer for 2 minutes.)

On your worksheet, Partner 2 will write down how this made them feel.

My partner ignoring and not looking at me made me feel:

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After these exercises, you can begin to understand how eye contact works when someone is speaking to you. How you feel when they look you in the eyes and nod their head, and how you feel when they ignore and never look at you.

Start practicing eye contact to find out what works best for you in a conversation.

