

INITIATING A CONVERSATION

Communication Series - Lesson #1

GOAL:

- To learn how to initiate appropriate conversation with others.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flipchart, markers, for each participant copies of *Initiating a Conversation Summary Sheet*.

METHOD:

Warm up: Getting to Know You

Divide the group into pairs. Instruct participants to find out three things about their partner that they did not know before. Ask each person to introduce their partner to the group.

Exercise 1: Initiating a Conversation

Illustrate how to initiate a conversation by using a role-play with two staff. Discuss the role-play and flipchart observations.

Exercise 2: Conversation Openers

Invite group to brainstorm topics for conversation openers. The list may include such things as:

- comments on the weather
- introducing yourself
- asking "May I sit here?"
- asking "What do you think of?"

Direct participants not to ask personal questions, especially if they do not know the person well. Include general topics.

Ask participants to discuss what to do if someone does not respond to their invitation to talk.

Exercise 3: Conversation Practise

Ask participants to form dyads. Tell each person to practise initiating a conversation and continue to dialogue for two minutes.

Encourage participants to share their experience in the large group.

Exercise 4 : Action Plan

Hand out copies of *Initiating a Conversation Summary Sheet*. Tell each person to initiate one conversation with someone they already know within their setting and report to the group next week.

EVALUATION:

CREDIT:

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INITIATING A CONVERSATION SUMMARY SHEET

Benefits of improving our conversational skills:

- we feel more comfortable in talking with others
- we increase our opportunities to meet new people
- we make friends
- we are able to express ourselves more easily.

Some good conversation openers are:

- Hi! I'm ... I'm sorry I don't know your name.
- May I sit here?
- Boy! It's ... outside. (Make appropriate to weather conditions)
- Hi! How are you today?
- How was your day?
- What are you working on today?
- What do you think of ... (sports, weather, T.V. etc.)

Do not ask personal questions especially if you do not know the person well.
Keep topics general.

When someone does not answer you when you speak to them it could mean:

- they feel self-conscious
- they don't want to talk right now
- they would like to be left alone
- they didn't realize you were speaking to them specifically

Close the conversation tactfully and try speaking to someone else.