

## **Communication Barriers Activity - Facilitator's Guide**

### **Purpose:**

- To foster awareness and understanding of the verbal and nonverbal barriers to communication in a culturally diverse context.

### **Instructions:**

- Students will be randomly split into four groups, Yellow, Blue, Red, and Green, by having each student randomly draw a slip of paper inscribed with a group color.
- Once sectioned off into four groups, each student should receive
  - ◆ A slip of paper in their group color to act as their name badge
  - ◆ A set of instructions for their specific group (copied below)
- Allow students a minute or two to read through their instructions and become familiar with them.
- Next, pair off students with someone from a different group (if there is an odd number of students present, make one group of three).
- Students should rotate partners every minute or two, but never end up with a partner from their group.
- Students should interact with each other following their own directions, but should not tell another color group their directions.

### **Debrief:**

- Following completion of the activity, use the columns on the whiteboard to have a discussion with the students.
- Ask the following questions (switching out group colors until you have asked for each group).

- ◆ 1. What was it like to interact with people from the *Yellow/Blue/Red/Green Group*?
- ◆ 2. How did you feel when you interacted with people in the *Yellow/Blue/Red/Green Group*?

→ Use a red marker to star any comments in the columns that were negative. Explain to the students that all of the rules from this activity are real communication rules in different cultures that we interact with everyday. We tend to view something different as negative, and that is why there are so many negative responses on the board.

### **Group Directions:**

#### **→ Yellow Group = Communication Rules:**

- ◆ Speak more softly than you normally do.
- ◆ Look down as you speak - to show respect.
- ◆ Do not ask questions - it is rude.

#### **→ Blue Group = Communication Rules:**

- ◆ Speak more loudly than you normally do.
- ◆ Look at the person's eyes when you speak - it shows respect.
- ◆ Ask questions quickly - it shows interest.

#### **→ Red Group = Communication Rules:**

- ◆ Stand about 6 inches closer than you normally do.
- ◆ Speak more quickly than you normally do.
- ◆ Do not smile - it is "rude."
- ◆ Ask a lot of questions including personal ones - it shows you care.

#### **→ Green Group = Communication Rules:**

- ◆ Speak more slowly than you normally do.

- ◆ Smile a lot - or else you are considered "rude."
- ◆ Use a lot of hand gestures when you speak.

<b>Yellow Group Communication Rules</b>	<b>Yellow Group Communication Rules</b>	<b>Yellow Group Communication Rules</b>
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