

Conflict

Broken Telephone/Broken Telegraph - A Classic

Brief Description/Purpose

This may be the most widely known game/activity in the world. In part that's because it can be used as an icebreaker, energizer, and to teach communication and conflict concepts. You probably know it but just in case, here's the detail.

One person is given a short sentence by the facilitator, or can write one down. He then whispers it into the ear of the next person, who in turn, passes it on to the next, and so on. There's no need to go beyond 15 people in the chain.

Then the last person is asked what she heard, and then the first person is asked what the original message was. Usually hilarity ensues as the two never match, and often change in fascinating ways.

Type

Verbal exercise that can be used as a basis for discussion on issues like communication and conflict, or as an icebreaker or energizer, since it's always funny, but see the caution.

Age Appropriate

Anyone that can talk, including young children who love this.

Ideal Group Size

10-15 people should be in each chain, but you can have any number of chains. Ideal for a huge group exercise, for example, in an auditorium.

Time For Exercise

As little as five minutes, but depends on how you de-brief

Topic/Subject

Conflict, communication

Detailed Instructions If Needed

None needed.

Additional Information if Available

Cautions/Hints

The only problem with this exercise is if many participants "know" the game. It still works just as

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well, but it's not quite as funny or surprising. On balance, not a big problem. A classic.

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