




COMMUNICATION SKILLS: QUESTIONING*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

 **Time:** 40 minutes

 **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate the importance of communicating clearly with others.
- Demonstrate how questioning skills are effective ways to find out information.

 **Training Methods:** Large Group Activity, Discussion

 **In This Activity You Will...**

- Play a game using open-ended questions (20 minutes)
- Repeat the game (10 minutes)
- Facilitate a discussion on the process of asking open-ended questions (10 minutes)

 **Materials:**

- Papers with famous names (two different names per participant)
- Masking tape
- Handout- Open-ended Questions
- Handout- Suggested Names

 **Preparation:**

- Write the name of a famous person on a slip of paper (twice as many names as participants in the training).

Instructions

1. Explain directions for activity: “We’re going to do an activity now that will show the importance of questioning. In a moment, we’re going to place a piece of paper on your back. There will be a famous person’s name on this paper. You’ll need to find out who your person is by asking only questions that can be answered by “yes” or “no,” such as, “Am I a woman?” “Am I famous?” etc.”
2. Tape a different name on each participant’s back so s/he can’t see what’s on it. [**Note: see suggestions for names in handouts.**]
3. Instruct participants to circulate around the room with names on their backs. They need to discover who they “are” by asking only questions that can be answered by “yes” or “no.”
4. After everyone has figured out their person or when 10 minutes is up, bring group back together and process with the following questions:
 - How easy or difficult was it to discover who you were?
 - What made it difficult?
 - How did you feel while doing this activity?
5. Refer to handout and review what open-ended questions are.
6. Using the additional sheets of famous people, put new names on participants’ backs and have them circulate again.
 - This time you should only ask questions that are open-ended to find out who you are. If someone asks you a “yes” or “no” question, do not answer him/her.

* This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring; Center for Creative Education, 2006.

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[An] interesting thing I learned was to ask open-ended questions of clients, rather than a yes or no question because you don't really learn that much if you ask yes or no questions... if you say "Does that make you feel bad?" you'll get "yes", but if you ask "How does that make you feel when your family has that attitude?" It opens up the dialogue. I thought that was very important.

Carol Garcia
Peer at Christie's Place



7. After time is up or everyone has discovered who they are this time, bring group back together and process.

- How was this time different from the last time?
- What made it easier?
- What made it harder?
- How many people found themselves asking closed-ended questions?
- How did you feel while you were doing this activity this time?
- How does this activity relate to interviewing peers?

Summary

These questioning skills are not only useful when working with your peers, but also when talking to your health care provider, case manager and others.

* This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring; Center for Creative Education, 2006.

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SESSION HANDOUT #1 of 2

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions are helpful for getting details about issues. The following words will help you get specific information from peers;

Where...

When...

Who...

What...

How...

*Although “why” is certainly an open-ended question, it’s better to avoid using it in a peer education setting since it can sometimes sound judgmental or make people defensive.

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SESSION HANDOUT #2 of 2

SUGGESTED NAMES TO PUT ON PARTICIPANTS' BACKS

- Aretha Franklin
- Lil' Kim
- Queen Latifah
- Oprah
- Michael Jordan
- Billy Graham
- Pope John Paul
- Bill Clinton
- Bill Cosby
- Martin Luther King
- Tiger Woods
- Princess Diana
- Michael Jackson
- Marilyn Monroe
- Elvis Presley
- Eddie Murphy
- Halle Berry
- Patti LaBelle
- Denzel Washington
- Elizabeth Taylor
- Serena Williams
- Venus Williams
- O.J. Simpson
- Whitney Houston