

## Listening skills

Listening is the foundation for learning and interacting. Adults tell children to listen, but few teach the skill to students. Part of the problem with listening stems from the fact that we think faster than we speak. Words arrive slowly, and our brains have opportunities to wander and think of other things. If we think something is too hard to understand or are turned off by the speaker's choice of words, we don't pay attention. Explain to your team that listening well and listening for information are important skills they need to do well in solving instant challenges.

### **The Team Manager's role in facilitating communication among the team**

- Teach listening skills
- Ensure two-way dialogue
- Help the team leave judgment out of idea generating
- Keep interactions positive and exciting

Incorporate some active listening games into Instant Challenge practice so the team can learn to listen and be actively engaged.

### **Games**

- **Mindbender challenges** —frame games, eyeball benders and following directions quizzes. Another great activity is to read directions and the team members have to draw what they hear... or what they think they hear. This has been an excellent lesson in listening to what the IC is asking for and enforcing how everyone hears and thinks differently.
- **Drawing Game**  
Active listening occurs when listeners engage the material they are listening to, with questions, comments and thought. By telling the team how to draw a picture without allowing them to ask questions, you can show them how difficult it can be to listen accurately. In this game, you tell team members to draw, for example, "a circle intersected by a line on top of a square to the left of a diamond." They will likely all have different results. This will give them a sense of how hard it is to listen accurately without asking questions.
- **What Were My Words**  
One person reads a story or an incident for everyone else to listen. Once he is done with it, any other person from the group is asked to repeat

it. The one who can retell the story as accurately as possible, wins!

- **Simultaneous Talking**

Have the group break off into smaller groups of 3. Place 1 of the 3 in the center and the remaining 2 will be to either side. Give one person on the outside a mundane topic and the other a different mundane topic like helicopters or how to clean your room. Instruct the people on the outside to talk NONSTOP about their given topic to the person in the middle. The person in the middle is to try to maintain both conversations as best they can. Make sure that, when the person in the middle is addressing one conversation, he/she turns toward that person.

Continue for a minute or 2 and place a new member of the 3 in the middle.

- **Line Story**

A suggestion for a title of the story is generated by the team. The team manager points at one person in the line. That person must start telling the story. When the TM points at another person in the line that person must continue the story. Not only must they continue the story but they must begin exactly where the other person left off mid word or mid-sentence. If the new person does not continue where they should, they sit down. If a player keeps speaking after the TM points at a new person, the player sits. If a player hesitates for two seconds before speaking they must sit. If the player makes no sense at all they must sit. The TM calls the players out just like they do in baseball. TM, "You're out!" Then everyone claps as the ousted player sits. After each elimination a new chapter number is given to the story. The leader reminds all what chapter they are up to and what the title of the story is.