

Making Eye Contact Exercise

Openness can create a positive, delivery-focused culture where issues can be discussed without fear and risks shared.

Good communication is a great place to start and can be encouraged through non-verbal behavior, such as making eye contact. After all, looking someone in the eye is important for showing both vulnerability and confidence.

The steps in this team-building exercise are as follows:

1. Once the team is sitting in a circle, tell them that this will be a silent exercise.
2. Ask one person to begin by briefly making (clear) eye contact with one other person within the circle. When the *sender* believes it has been received, they give a slight nod, and the *receiver* does the same to confirm.
3. The receiver now becomes the sender, and again makes eye contact with a new person. Once sent and received (and confirmed by nods), the receiver becomes the sender and sends the message.
4. Continue until everyone has received the eye contact.
5. Practice several times, with a different person starting on each occasion.
6. Once the practice part of the game is complete, a competitive element is added.
7. One person is asked to leave the room.
8. Choose a sender to begin, unknown to the person that left the room.
9. The person returns to the room and stands in the center of the circle as the *catcher*.
10. The game begins, and just as in the first session, the *message* is passed around the circle.
11. The aim is for the catcher to track down the holder of the message as quickly as possible. The senders and receivers try and continue passing the message without being spotted.
12. Stop the game when the catcher has caught the message being passed or everyone in the circle has received it.
13. Repeat with each person being the catcher.

Scoring can be added to make the game more competitive, for example, taking one away from the individual when they get it wrong while being the catcher or adding a point when they get it right.

This exercise is harmless fun but a great way to begin a day of training or focused work sessions.