

Session Four

Communication: Making Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches

Supplies Needed: Bread, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Plastic Knives (one per pair), a square or rectangular table at the front and center of the room, and newspaper or other covering for the table.

Ask for eight to ten volunteers from the group (or a smaller even number). Instruct the volunteers to stand, back-to-back, alongside the table. Place supplies for making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches on the table.

The individuals facing the table will be responsible for making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Their partners, who are facing the audience, will provide the direction. Sandwich makers should be given the following instructions:

- Do literally what your partner instructs you to do.
- You may not show your partner what you are doing until the sandwich is done, and your partner may not turn around to look.
- When you have completed the task, your partner may then turn to face the sandwich.

Note: Do not intervene unless there is a challenge that cannot be fixed unless you do. For example, if those giving instruction all say, “get bread”, and their partners all reach for the loaf at the same time, it may be necessary for you to pause the activity and inform those giving instructions that the loaf is in a bag which is tied shut. This information may help them to alter their instructions.

When evaluating the activity, the facilitator(s) should ask the following questions of the volunteers:

- Was this easy or difficult? Why?
- What were some of the challenges you faced?

Of the observers in the audience:

- What did you see happen?
- Why did it happen?
- What could have been done better?

Review the following points with the group at the completion of the activity:

Many times, we assume we know exactly how to do things, especially if we have done them many times before. We also assume that other people understand what we are trying to say. However, it is important to be able to look at situations in different ways, pay attention to detail, and be clear and deliberate about our communication. Otherwise, we run the risk of turning something that should be fairly simple into something that is overly complicated.

- Can you think of other situations where this has happened to you?
- How might this apply when working with youth?