



THIS IS A WHAT ACTIVITY

Purpose:

To stimulate a busy work environment with multiple tasks and confused messaging, then to talk about strategies for clear communication and staying focused amidst chaos and confusion.

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

Two objects that can be passed from hand to hand around a circle, such as a ball, cap, shoe, etc.

Directions:

The group sits in a circle. As the leader, you start by holding one of the objects in your hand. Begin passing the object to the person on your right (Amy) and saying, "This is a yellow-bellied sapsucker." She responds, "A what?" You say, "A yellow-bellied sapsucker." She takes the object and says, "Oh, a yellow-bellied sapsucker."

Amy then turns to the next person (Joe) and starts the same interaction with him, except that when Joe asks her, "A what?" she turns back to you and asks, "A what?" You restate, "A yellow-bellied sapsucker," then Amy turns and repeats it to Joe, who says, "Oh, a yellow-bellied sapsucker." And so it continues all the way around the circle. Each new person to receive the animal will ask the previous person in the circle "A what?" who will ask the previous person "A what?" and so on, until it gets back to you to tell them "A yellow-bellied sapsucker."

Meanwhile, start a second item going around the circle in the opposite direction. Turn to the person on your left, Greg, and say, "This is a spineyback-horned toad." Greg asks, "A what?" Repeat, "A spineyback horned toad." Greg says, "Oh, a spineyback-horned toad." Thus the cycle continues the other way.

Chaos erupts when the two items meet at the same point and the poor person in the middle tries to keep the two conversations going and intact. The conversation train generally will get all muddled and there will be laughs.

Discussion Questions

- Did this game feel like chaos or calm?
- How did you respond to this task? Did you get really focused, or did you just kick back and enjoy the chaos?
- How did it feel to juggle multiple items and communication streams?
- Did your messages ever get confused or off track?
- When faced with chaos, how do you respond?
- How do you handle juggling multiple things and mixed messages?
- How do you keep things straight and headed in the right direction?
- What are specific strategies we can follow to limit or deal with chaos and confusion?
- How can we best create clarity amidst the chaos and confusion?

Activity from Bill Van de Griek, Nashville, Tennessee