

Recognizing Our Perceptions

A Filtering Situation

Purpose: To meet and learn to recognize the impact of our perceptions when interpreting another person's communication message and/or behavior.

Audience: Adults who work to increase capacity of youth and community.

Time: 15 – 30 minutes

Supplies: Coffee filters; color pens

Facilitation points: Help participants consider the true intentions in what another person says.

You are who you are because of your gender, your generation, what you know, your life experiences, your self-concept, type of work you do, your interests.

You have a sensory or filtering system that is keen.

When people approach you, you filter their messages, both verbal and non-verbal, with your sensory system.

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Activity:

Introduce the purpose of the activity. Remind participants of group rules for treating one another respectfully.

1. Hand out a coffee filter to each participant.
2. Invite each person to think about who they are.
3. Ask participants to flatten out the filter and use pens to draw symbols or write words which describe their person.

List, for example: where you live (i.e., rural, urban); how your family is structured (siblings, parents, grandparents, single, other); what hobbies you enjoy; what work you do; what brings you enjoyment; list or draw your generation, gender, race, level of education, etc.

Discussion: When someone speaks to you, you are the receiver. The other person is the sender. The imaginary space between the receiver and sender is called “communication noise.” All the things you listed on your ‘filter’ are part of the ‘noise’ and influence your interpretation of the sender’s message.

1. Dividing into pairs, ask participants to hold up their filter at their ear and eye level. Ask one person to be the sender and to describe the room to the receiver. Switch roles.

Reflect:

How can your unique filter cause you to hear or notice certain things?

Apply:

In the past, what has been your reaction when others respond or react differently than you expected? What new actions, attitudes or behavior can you use when encountering differences in the future?