

ACTIVE LISTENING



Robbery Report

Introduction

Living in the age of information, we receive information rapidly and in bulk amounts, creating more space for misinformation and disinformation.

This activity helps us to understand how easily misinformation would arise in a compromised situation.

Robbery Report Message:

There's been a robbery! Please I need your help! I was walking into Cargills and a man came running out. He knocked me over and kept running. He was carrying a dark blue bag in his right hand and it looked like he had a gun in his left hand. He was wearing a black jacket that was torn on the shoulder, a red and green striped shirt and blue jeans. He had skinny legs and a big stomach. He wore sun glasses and black shoes. He was bald and had a light beard. He was about 6 foot tall and was probably in his mid-thirties

Instructions

1. Invite three volunteers (A, B, C) to move out of the workshop space so that they could enter when instructed.
2. Distribute the copies of the robbery report handout to everyone except the three individuals who are out of the workshop space.
3. Request the larger group of participants to read the report carefully, and to monitor and evaluate the accuracy of the report when the volunteers repeat it. It is important to note any changes or omissions that would occur.
4. Invite the volunteer (A) back into the room. Read the robbery report to this person. Use a tone of voice that conveys urgency but do not speak so quickly as to make it impossible to remember any details.
5. Invite the volunteer (B) back into the room. Ask the volunteer (A) to repeat the report to volunteer (B). The rest of the group should be filling in their handouts.
6. Invite the volunteer (C) into the room. Ask the volunteer (B) to repeat the report to volunteer (C).
7. Announce that you are a police officer called in to investigate the crime, and ask the volunteer (C) to repeat the report to you.

Reflections

Ask the three volunteers:

- How well did you grasp the robbery report?
- Were there any gaps identified? Why did it happen?
- Optional: Were there any specifics in the robbery report that made you remember the details?
- Optional: What made it difficult to remember certain details?

Ask the audience:

- What are your observations on the three volunteers who took part in the activity? How did the statement from the report change? To what extent did it change?
- What happens when receiving information that was passed down many times, as opposed to receiving it from the original source?
- What are the practical examples of such information distortion? What was the end result?
- Optional: What can be done to avoid such distortions, especially when the information is crucial and urgent?

Handout

Directions: For each repetition of the report, note anything the person missed, added, or changed from the previous report.

First Repetition

Second Repetition

Third Repetition

Slanted Storytelling

Introduction

We listen to stories on a daily basis, but in these stories do we hear the actual facts or the narrator's perspective?

The objective of this activity is to explore how the narrator-bias that slants the way a story is told, or how facts are communicated. It further encourages us to reflect on missing pieces of information when listening or receiving information.

Instructions

- Divide participants into smaller groups with even number of participants in a group (4-6 members per group).
- One person from each group receives the following story and is requested to familiarize himself/herself with the story.

Story: *A father and a son are travelling to school by car. As they are travelling a tree falls on the car and the father is knocked unconscious and the son breaks a leg. The ambulance rushes the son to the hospital and the father is left behind where he is looked after by a doctor. When they arrive at the hospital the surgeon looks at the boy with the broken leg and says 'This is my son!'*

- Distribute a SAM card with a Situation or an Attitude or a Mood to those who received the story (SAM: Situation-Attitude-Mood).
- Ask them not to tell anyone else what is written on their card.
- They now have to retell the story to the group using the interpretation in the SAM card.
- After each storyteller has presented his/her stories to the rest of the group, the group has to guess what was on the SAM card.
- After a few attempts the storyteller can reveal the SAM card statement.

Examples of the SAM Card:

It is the funniest story you have ever heard or told.

- You are a police officer and you are telling the story of a suspect's movements.
- You have to use the restroom, but must first finish the story.
- You dislike the person you are talking about.
- You are stirring things up with some gossip.
- It is the saddest story you have ever told or heard.

Reflections

- In what ways was information changed and reshaped according to the storyteller's bias?
- Is this a process that is easy to detect in real life?
- Do we intentionally or unintentionally change the information we pass on?
- In what ways and in what situations have we done this?
- Optional: How can we detect and avoid the narrator bias?