

Back-to-Back Activity

(Alternate Version)

Supplies needed: identical sets of puzzle pieces (cut apart) – one for each person; one Ziploc bag per person; optional: several pairs of scissors will be needed if pieces are not already cut apart

Instructions: Find a partner. Each person receives a set of puzzle pieces. Determine which partner is “A” and which is “B”. Turn away from each other so that you are sitting back-to-back.

Round 1: Partner A is the speaker and Partner B is the listener.

Partner A arranges the puzzle pieces in any order desired. Partner A will then communicate to Partner B how to make an identical arrangement of the pieces. Neither Partner can look at the other’s puzzle pieces during the instruction phase. Partner A can talk as much as needed. Partner B may not talk during this round.

When Partner A has finished giving instructions, then both Partners will look at each other’s puzzle arrangement to see how closely they align with each other.

Round 2: Partner B is the speaker and Partner A is the listener.

Partner B arranges the puzzle pieces in any order desired. Partner B will then communicate to Partner A how to make an identical arrangement of the pieces. Neither Partner can look at the other’s puzzle pieces during the instruction phase. Partner A can talk as much as needed. Partner B may ask any clarifying questions needed to better understand Partner A’s arrangement.

When Partner A and Partner B agree that they have finished, both Partners will look at each other’s puzzle arrangement to see how closely they align with each other.

Discussion Questions:

- Describe what happened during Round 1.
- How successful were you in duplicating the puzzle piece arrangement.
- Partner A (speaker) what was frustrating about this round?
- Partner B (listener) what was frustrating about this round?
- Describe what was different about Round 2.
- Was duplicating the puzzle piece arrangement easier or more difficult? Why?
- Partners, describe why this round may have been easier.
- What is the importance of having two-way communication?
- How do nonverbal communication methods improve overall communication?
- Was it difficult to listen when you couldn’t see your partner?
- How does asking clarifying questions help you to better understand each other?
- How does providing feedback to each other help you communicate more clearly?
- Can you think of a time when you were able to communicate better when you asked questions or provided feedback?
- How can you use what you have learned in this activity in other aspects of your lives?

