

# MATES Junior Activity

## Resource Guide

Goal: **Prosocial Competency**

Activity Type: Individual, Group  
Relationship Stage: Mid-late

### Activity Name:

“When you say nothing at all”

### Objective:

To discuss and role-play nonverbal communication

### Preparation Time:

None

### Activity Duration:

Will vary according to the number of components and participants

### Required Material:

None

### Instructions:

- This activity is a set of aspects of nonverbal communication which can be combined and/or adapted to various activities. Be creative with how you use them!
- Component 1: Tone of Voice. Participants say the same statement (e.g., I love playing soccer) using different tones of voice (e.g., excited, sad, angry) to express the emotion.
- Component 2: Volume. Using examples of places where people talk (e.g., in a library, at a sports game, when someone is sleeping, on the school bus, talking on the phone) ask whether you should use a soft, normal, or loud speaking volume. Discuss why certain volumes are suitable in certain situations.
- Component 3: Eye contact. In pairs, one person speaks for 30 seconds about something of their choice. The other person makes eye contact constantly/some of the time/never. At the end of 30 seconds, ask the speaker how they felt about the eye contact. Switch roles. (Note that some cultures have beliefs about not making eye contact and this can be challenging for them. Be aware of this, but also consider discussing cultural beliefs about eye contact with your mentee if applicable. Why might eye contact be respectful in some cultures, but disrespectful in others?)
- Component 4: Gestures. Brainstorm various gestures people make and what they mean (e.g., crossed arms, wagging finger, waving hand)
- Component 5: Personal space. Ask mentees where they are (un)comfortable with different people (e.g., family, friends, teachers, strangers, neighbours) standing/sitting near them. Who gets to stand closely? Who should stay further away? Why?
- Component 6: Posture. How does emotion affect how you stand/sit? Try role-playing with your mentee in various situations (e.g., how do you stand/sit when you sit at a desk at school? When you are on the phone? Eating dinner? Watching TV?)
- Combine the various components to identify how people feel. If someone is angry, what tone and volume of voice do they use? What about eye contact or posture?