

## Facilitator's Toolbox – Communication Module Through the Grapevine

**Purpose:** To demonstrate how easily every day communication can go awry; to create awareness that we don't always work very hard at communicating, especially w/our families.

**Outcome:** Increased awareness of value of improved communication; increased receptiveness to forthcoming information.

**Instructions:** Say something like *"I'm going to whisper something to     (name)     and we'll see if it gets around the room."*

Be sure not to give any further instructions. People tend to take the facilitator's lead and whisper to each other all the around the group.

Whisper the following in the first person's ear:

***"What you do speaks to loudly, I can hardly hear what you say."***

After the phrase has been whispered completely around the room, ask the last person what he or she heard. It is very seldom what it started as and everyone usually gets a good laugh out of hearing the final version. You can go back through the group, asking what each person heard & try to figure out where it got distorted if you want & have time.

**Process:** Questions to ask:

*If we had told you before starting, that if the phrase made it around the room completely intact, as it was first shared, you would each get \$50, would you have done anything differently?*

*If so, what? Why?*

*How often is communication within our families like this—we don't really do all we could do to hear what's being said?*

*If you remember, we didn't give any specific instructions. Person #1 could have walked over to the last person & told them the phrase. What does this say about assuming, and following along, versus thinking for ourselves?*

**Final Comment:** *Tonight we're going to talk about several things that get in the way of effective communication, and some ways we might be able to improve communication and understanding in our families.*

