



# Interference

Groups must successfully communicate messages to each other through interference

## TIME

10-20 minutes



## TEAM STAGE

Norming, Performing

## MATERIALS

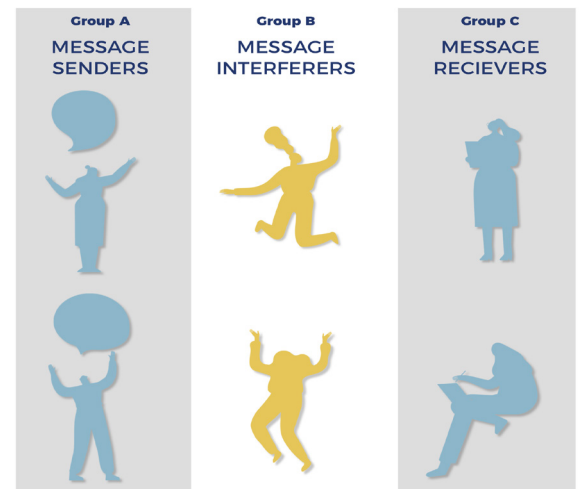
Two 30-foot ropes, whistle

## SUMMARY

Groups must try to successfully communicate messages to each other through interference. Participants will explore different ways of communicating and understanding each other.

## SET UP

- Prepare the messages to use in this activity by writing them on white paper using a black marker in large, easy to read print.
- Create a playing area by laying two ropes on the ground parallel to each other and setting the boundaries (see visual to the right). Decide on the amount of space between the ropes based on the size of each small group and the level of difficulty desired for the activity. More space will most likely be of higher difficulty. If rope is not available, use tape, chalk, cones, etc.
- Divide the group into three equal, smaller groups. Group A will be the "Message Senders", Group B will be the "Message Interferers" and Group C will be the "Message Receivers".



## INSTRUCTIONS

- Explain the rules to all participants:
  - Group A has 20 seconds to transmit a specific message to Group C.
  - Group B (the Message Interferers) must prevent Group C from receiving the message successfully.
  - At the end of 20 seconds, everyone must be silent and Group C will share the message they received.
  - Groups A and C win if it is the exact same message sent by Group A. If Group C has only part (or none) of the message, Group B wins.
  - Groups may use Verbal and non-verbal cues that can ONLY be sent by utilizing voice or body language. No communication aids (such as texting, signs, etc.) can be used.
  - Each group must stay within their boundaries and cannot travel into any other zone.
- **Facilitator Note:** This activity gets VERY loud. Make sure to conduct this activity in a space that will not disturb others.



## INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*

- Round One:
  - After all is set and everyone understands the objective and rules, secretly show Group A (the Message Senders) the first message, which is: *"A friend is a present you give yourself."* Do not let the other teams see the message.
  - Allow the Message Senders 30 seconds to prepare a plan and then blow the whistle to signal the start of the first round.
  - After 20 seconds blow the whistle again and get everyone to stop so the Message Receivers can share what they heard. Then, the Message Senders can reveal the message they were told to determine which group(s) won. Repeat this process for each round.
- Round Two:
  - Prepare for round two by asking Group A to move to the center playing area where they will now be Message Interferers. Group B moves to the message receiving area and Group C moves to the message sending area. The message to be sent during round two is: *"You don't have to try, you just have to be."*
- Round Three:
  - Prepare for round three by asking Group C to move to the center playing area where they will now be message interferers. Group A moves to the message receiving area and Group B moves to the message sending area. The message to be sent during round three is: *"The quieter you become the more you can hear."*
- It's important for each group to rotate into each of the positions (Sender, Interferer, Receiver) so everyone can experience all three.
  - **Facilitator Notes:**
    - The Message Interferers will usually yell at either the Message Senders or the Message Receivers (or both). The Interferers may jump up and down and wave their arms so as to act as a further distraction.
    - Message Senders that are successful will tend to plan their efforts and yell their message as a unified group. They may also accurately act out the saying.

## VARIATIONS

- The messages in each round can be different than the ones provided. Choose random sentences, or strategically use sentences that have meaning to the group or can be discussed in a debrief.
- 👥 **Large Group:** To facilitate this activity for a large group, increase the size of the playing area by using longer ropes and spacing them farther apart. Also consider letting varying the time to more or less than 20 seconds for sending the message.
- 💻 **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, put each group in a breakout room to start each round so they can strategize. Go into the breakout room with the Message Senders to give them the message. Then, close the breakout rooms so that everyone is back in the main session room to play. Make sure the chat is disabled while the activity is taking place. After each round, re-open the same breakout rooms and give the next message to the new group of Message Senders. [\[click here for video\]](#)

## DEBRIEF QUESTIONS *(on next page)*



## DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
  - What was challenging about this activity?
  - What strategies were the most effective for the Message Senders? Message Receivers? Message Interferers?
- So What:
  - What can interference cause within a group?
  - In what ways has this group experienced interference before?
- Now What:
  - What types of interference can be anticipated when communicating as a group?
  - How can effective communication be ensured within this group?

■ **Facilitator Note:** These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group's experience and add or change questions as needed.