Volunteer Learning Series

1. Main

1.1 Introduction

Notes:

Welcome to the Michigan State University Extension Volunteer Learning Series. Please note the date on this course and know that specific guidance may change over time. Please use the arrows at the bottom that point left and right to navigate through this course.

1.2 Objectives Layout

Notes:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/about/approved-activities

This course is to help volunteers know where to find current policy and resources for offering face-to-face experiences, and to help them identify and apply appropriate strategies for handing conflict. Because policies are likely to be adjusted, please make sure you reference the MSU Extension approved activities website frequently, and use your MSU Extension staff professional as a key resource for guidance and updated information.

1.3 Approved Activities Website
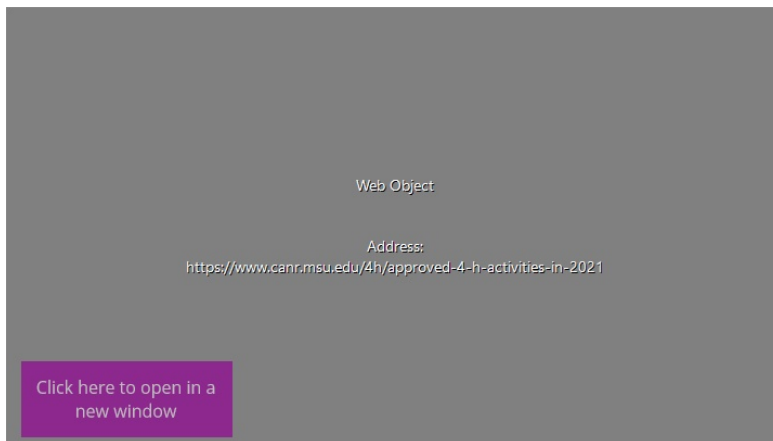
Notes:

Here is what the approved activities website looks like it. We recommend you use the button to open it in a new window and bookmark it. Reference it often, as it will be updated with the most current guidance, expectations, and processes .

https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/about/approved-activities

1.4 Seeking Approval

Notes:

When you are seeking approval to offer face-to-face programming, be sure to work with your local MSU Extension staff member. Be prepared with the following: When the activity would happen, how long it will be, where it will be, how many people you think will be there, and your safety plan. Your local MSU Extension Professionals will provide specifics to you on this expected safety plan.

1.5 Expectations for Meeting Face-to-Face

Notes:

When meeting face-to-face, we need to make sure you understand the following information. Please read each statement, and visit any links provided, and then click on the box to show agreement.

https://msu.edu/together-we-will/msu-community-compact/

1.8 Expectations for Meeting Face-to-Face

Notes:

When meeting face-to-face, we need to make sure you understand the following information. Please read each one before checking the agreement box.

1.9 Expectations for Meeting Face-to-Face

Notes:

When meeting face-to-face, we need to make sure you understand the following information. Please read each one before checking the agreement box.

1.10 Expectations for Meeting Face-to-Face

Notes:

When meeting face-to-face, we need to make sure you understand the following information. Please read each one before checking the agreement box.

1.11 Expectations for Meeting Face-to-Face

Notes:

When meeting face-to-face, we need to make sure you understand the following information. Please read each one before checking the agreement box.

1.12 INTRO

Notes:

Now let's focus in on how you can deal with any conflict that may occur during programming due to mask-wearing or social distancing guidelines.

1.13 Welcome to your team
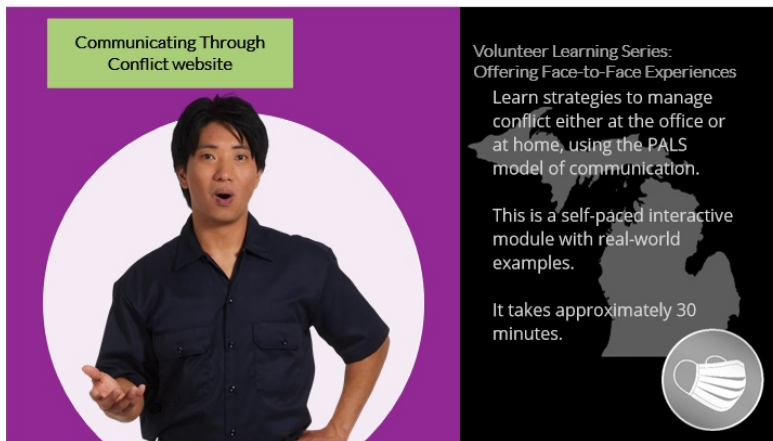
Notes:

The materials in the following section is based on 'Communicating through Conflict', a self-paced online certificate program on conflict management. Use the button to visit the website to learn more or register.

Since March of 2020, individuals and organizations are experiencing an increase in stress

and complex situations related to the Novel Coronavirus. Some governments and organizations have also issued their own new policies about wearing masks of regarding social distancing, like standing apart in stores, or screening staff and customers.

about skills building (Slide Layer)

about intro (Slide Layer)

1.14 Objectives Layout

Notes:

Many organizations now have different policies meant to keep everyone safe. However, employees, participants, and volunteers are facing challenges in communicating and enforcing these polices. News outlets have been reporting instances of escalation leading to unsafe or even violent situations.

We hope the strategies in this course will help you communicate in contexts related to enforcing mask-wearing and social distancing policies.

But there are some situations that have the potential to be tense and we hope to provide you tips to reduce the conflict and remind you to share any situations where conflict needs to be addressed with your local MSU Extension Staff member.

1.15 Objectives Layout

Notes:

This course will help you apply the strategies from Communicating through Conflict to prevent or de-escalate conflict and maintain a safe environment for everyone. As one of the prevention strategies from the CDC, this course is considered training on conflict resolution and nonviolent responses.

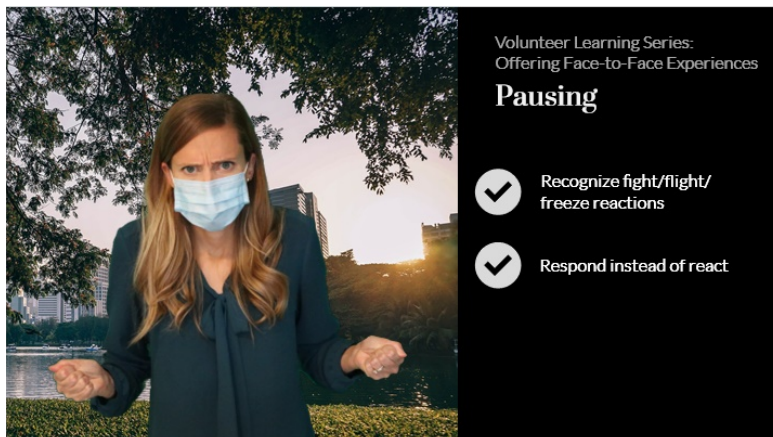This was developed for workplace situations, but can provide a framework for volunteer situations

1.16 PALS

Notes:

In this course. will be following the MSU Extension Communicating through Conflict method: P for Pause, A for Ask, L for Listen, and S for Speak or "PALS."

1.17 PAUSING

Notes:

Let's get started with the importance of pausing. Our brains are wired to react quickly when we feel threatened. We may fight by getting aggressive, flee by avoiding it or running way, or freeze and not know what to do in the moment.   Be aware if you are starting to react this way, and try to avoid it. The key is to respond instead of react.

By intentionally pausing in tense situations, we can slow down our emotional reaction and

respond rationally.

1.18 Pausing

Notes:

When a situation changes from a disagreement or misunderstanding and you sense aggression in conflict, remain calm to de-escalate. By initiating a pause, you can focus on safety.

Aggressive behavior has the tendency to be mutually reinforcing. Be aware to not become aggressive yourself if someone else is showing signs of aggression. For example, directing someone to calm down doesn't typically calm them down. However, shifting the conversation with a pause can help.

Different people and even different cultures may express aggression or frustration differently. Use the information buttons to explore different common signals of aggression, but also remember that some people use body-language in different ways. For example, speaking louder or using exaggerated gestures may be normal for one person, but not for another, so ;ook for changes in in nonverbal communication.

1.19 Pausing

Notes:

Because different people and even different cultures communication different, they may express aggression or frustration differently. This is not always straightforward. For example, speaking louder or using exaggerated gestures may be normal for one person, but not for another, so look for changes.

If you sense someone is showing signs of aggression, it doesn't hurt to slow down or shift the conversation with a pause. Even if they are talking loudly or using exagerrated gestures because that is their style, it won't hurt the conversation.

1.20 Pausing

Notes:

Pausing might look different depending on the situation. Breathing can be used to stop or slow down a conversation. If you notice yourself reacting to a situation, and your breathing has become rapid or shallow, take slower deep breaths. One way to do this is with box breathing.

1.21 P box breathe
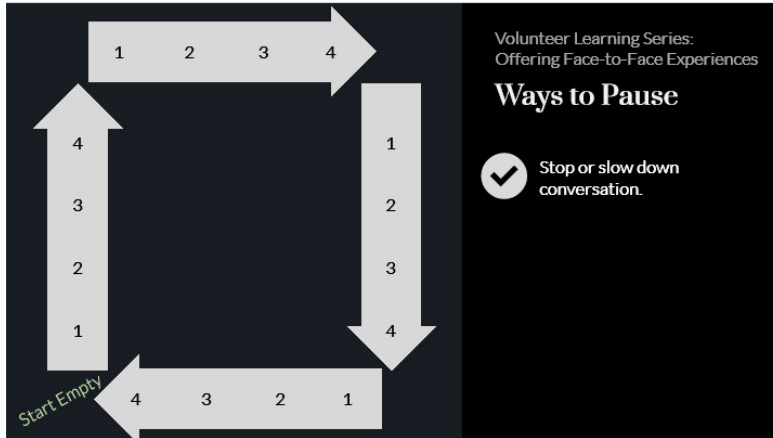
Notes:

Box breathing is something you can learn and practice. We are going to do it together now 3 times.

Start by exhaling for empty lungs. Breath in and count to 4. Hold the air 2, 3, 4. Exhale slowly 2, 3, 4. Hold 2, 3, 4 (repeat)

You also may try integrating a calming phrase "peace starts with me…" repeat. This also helps to distract your brain and to get back to your rational self. This is a skill you can teach kids as well.

1 (Slide Layer)

2 (Slide Layer)

3 (Slide Layer)

1.22 Pausing

Notes:

Another way to slow down a conversation is to take notes. You may say, hold on for one moment, I want to jot this down for later. Since we write slower than we speak, it forces you to focus on what the person is saying rather than reacting in the moment.

There may be times when it is best to deflect and pivot in the situation. In this case, you may give the person options to leave feedback by calling your MSU Extension Professional or offering an alternative.

And finally, a pause may also mean stopping the interaction for your safety. In the case of social distancing, if a person refuses to follow your policies, you may calmly ask them to leave. If this is an in-person interaction, there may not be time to safely resolve the dispute in that moment.

If a person refuses your ask, calmly remind them that if they refuse to meet our expectations, you will have no choice but to end the meeting. If they refuse to leave, make an announcement that the meeting or program must end due to lack of compliance. Inform your local MSU Extension professional of the situation. As always, if you are ever concerned for your safety or the safety of others, seek assistance from 911.

1.23 What strategy would work in this situation?

Notes:

Let look at a couple of scenarios. Read the scenario, and then choose the best strategy.

1 (Slide Layer)

2 (Slide Layer)

Volunteer Learning Series:
Offering Face-to-Face Experiences

What strategy would work in this situation?

A volunteer attends an event wearing a mask, but complains about the policy requiring masks be worn. They threaten to stop helping out the group as a volunteer.

Definitely a good option. Make sure you aren't becoming angry and aggressive yourself. Pay attention to how your feel so you stay under control.

Continue

3 (Slide Layer)

Volunteer Learning Series:
Offering Face-to-Face Experiences

What strategy would work in this situation?

A volunteer attends an event wearing a mask, but complains about the policy requiring masks be worn. They threaten to stop helping out the group as a volunteer.

This wouldn't be necessary unless they won't keep their mask and you have asked them to put it back on. Try another option.

Try again

1.24 What strategy would work in this situation?

Volunteer Learning Series:
Offering Face-to-Face Experiences

What strategy would work in this situation?

A program participant arrives at a program and refuses to wear their mask over their nose. You have pulled them aside and asked them twice to put their mask over their nose and explained that it is part of the information you shared with everyone prior to the meeting and they are still refusing.

Take notes and let the volunteer know you will talk your local MSU Extension Professional..

Check your physiological reactions.

Ask them to leave and end the meeting for everyone.

1 (Slide Layer)

Volunteer Learning Series:
Offering Face-to-Face Experiences

What strategy would work in this situation?

A program participant arrives at a program and refuses to wear their mask over their nose. You have pulled them aside and asked them twice to put their mask over their nose and explained that it is part of the information you shared with everyone prior to the meeting and they are still refusing.

You will want to share this information with your local MSU Extension Professional..

However, if the participant is refusing to wear their mask appropriately you will need to think about the next step to protect everyone who participates in the meetings.

What's another choice?

Try again

2 (Slide Layer)

Volunteer Learning Series:
Offering Face-to-Face Experiences

What strategy would work in this situation?

A program participant arrives at a program and refuses to wear their mask over their nose. You have pulled them aside and asked them twice to put their mask over their nose and explained that it is part of the information you shared with everyone prior to the meeting and they are still refusing.

Perhaps. You should be doing this before you ask the participant to put their mask over their nose. However, at this point you need to be thinking about what the next steps are.

What's another choice?

Try again

3 (Slide Layer)

Volunteer Learning Series:
Offering Face-to-Face Experiences

I understand that our policies may be different than others and that can be confusing and frustrating. However, the MSU Extension policy requires wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth when at face-to-face programs and activities. Would you like my help in locating one that you can wear? If you do not adhere to the face-covering policy, you will need to immediately leave the program/activity.
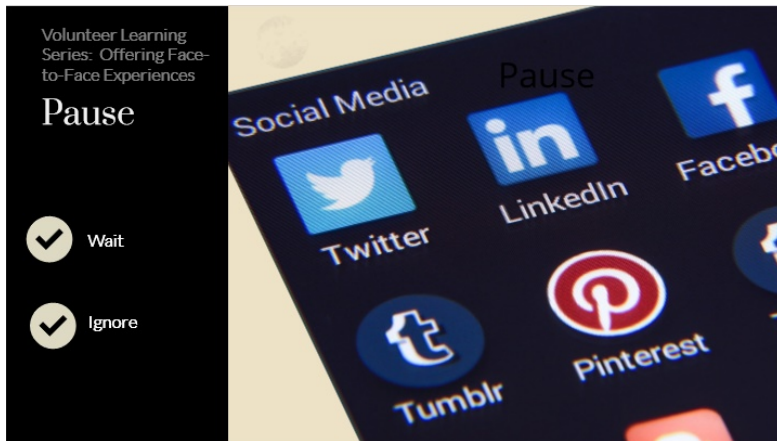
refusing.

Yes. At this point, you will just need to end the meeting for everyone.

An example script is to the right.

Continue

1.25 Social Media Pause

Notes:

Pausing is especially important online and on email or social media. Be careful to wait before replying to anything that can generate conflict. Think carefully about if you even need to reply. In situations related to social media, ignoring a comment can be a good course of action. Let's look at a scenario.
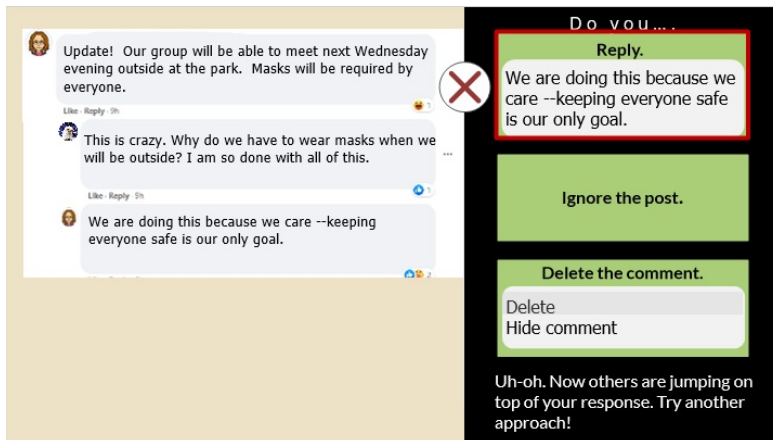
1.26 Social Media Pause
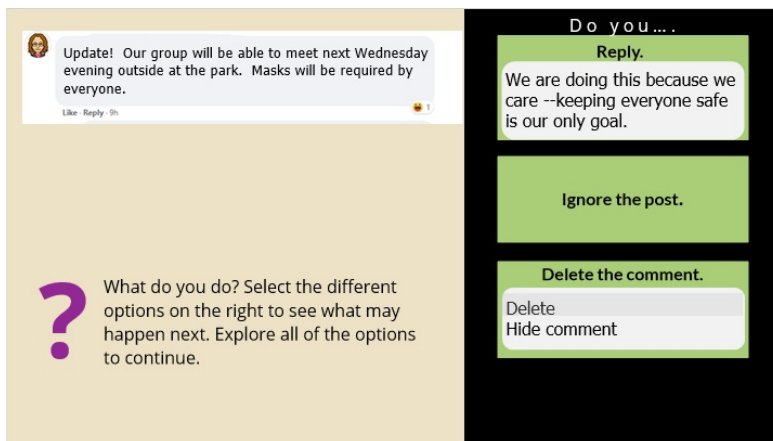
Notes:

Imagine you received a snarky response to a post where you announced your mask-wearing requirements. What should you do? Select the different options to see what may happen next.

****

You can't really change minds by arguing on Facebook. It really isn't a good way to have a conversation or try and create understanding., and it may make the situation worse. Instead, if you know the individual making the comment, it may be worthwhile to call or talk to them directly and offline.
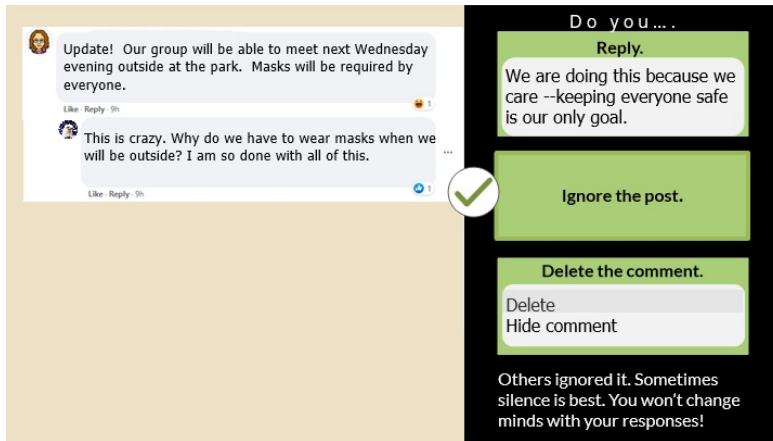
****

Sometimes silence is best because it stops the conversation. You may want to follow up with the person offline, though, so they feel their voice is heard. An exception to this may be when the comment was completely inappropriate, such as using abusive or foul language. In those cases, talk to your local MSU Extension Professional for guidance, as deleting or hiding the comment may be more appropriate.

Deleting or hiding a comment can create more issues. Save that reaction for posts that use abusive or foul language, or are very offensive.

Reply (Slide Layer)

Ignore (Slide Layer)

Delete (Slide Layer)

1.27 Social Media Pause

Notes:

The key points to remember are, first, that arguing online or defending yourself will often result in making the situation worse. Don't create a social media debate! However, if you know the individual who is posting something negative or creating conflict, it may be a good idea to have someone follow-up with the person using a different and less public form of communication, such as a phone call or email. That can help maintain relationships. If you need support in determining what to do talk to your Local MSU Extension Professional.

1.28 Summary Layout

Notes:

When you are pausing, remember the primary purpose is to check in and to take care of yourself, not to control or manipulate the other person. You pause to give yourself the chance to respond calmly or ensure your safety. If you tell someone they need a pause or to take a moment to calm down, this may make them more upset. Here are a few example phrases you may try when initiating your pause.

1.29 60/40 Layout
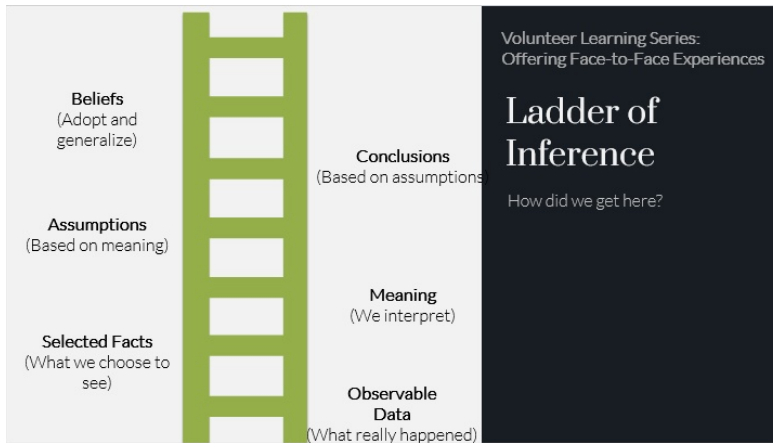
Notes:

Another way to unpack your assumptions is to revisit the ladder of inference. It is a way of understanding how people in the same situation can jump to completely different conclusions and act on them. Although it appears we all start with the same data in conflict, depending on what one person chooses to see and interpret can set them on an entirely different path of understanding.
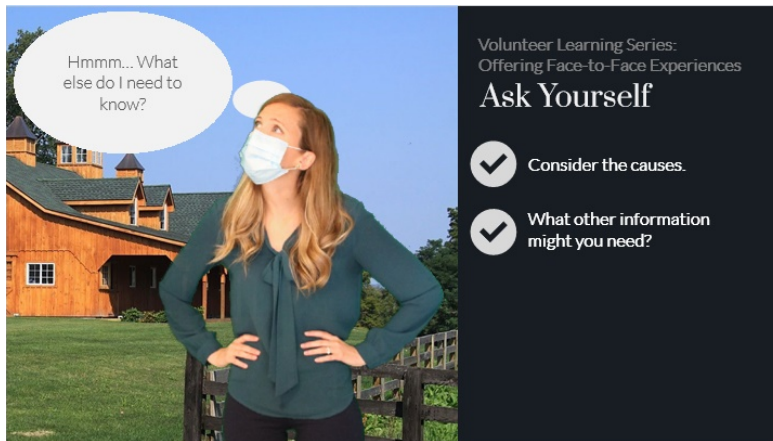
1.30 A Ask yourself
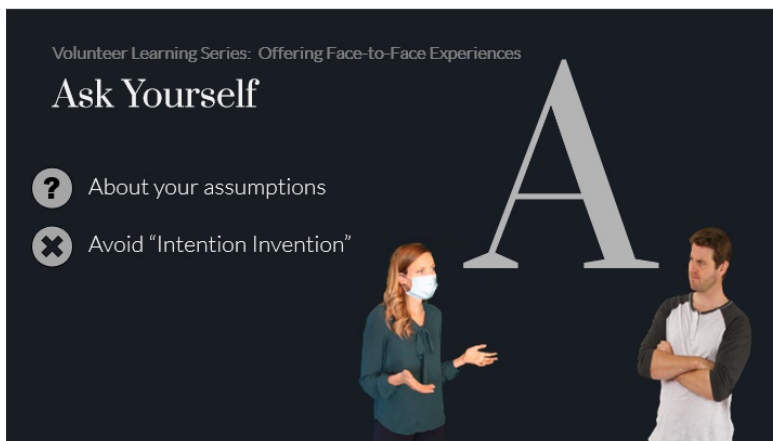
Notes:

Now we are moving on to the A, Ask. We all have different perceptions of the world. In a tense situation, it is important to ask yourself a few things before you respond.

By stopping to think about your own assumptions you can avoid intention invention. This is when we make up the reasons why someone is behaving a certain way. However, the only way we can know their reasons is to ask, or get more information so we understand their perspective better.
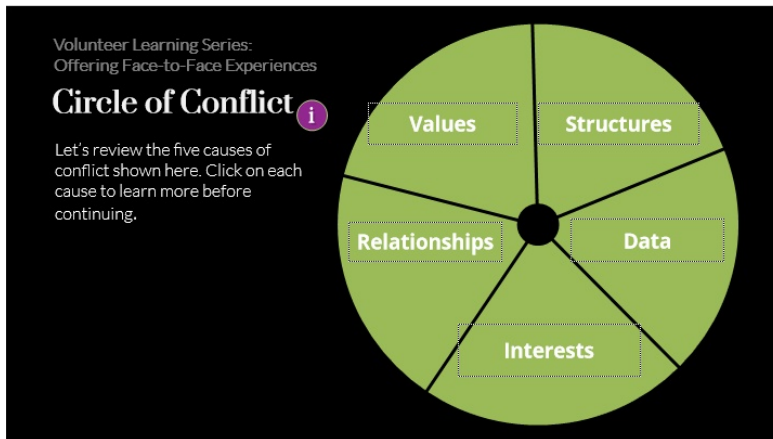
1.31 ASK YOURSELF

Notes:

When climbing back down the ladder of inference, you may want to think about the various causes of conflict and what may be at play in your particular situation. Ask yourself what other information you may need.
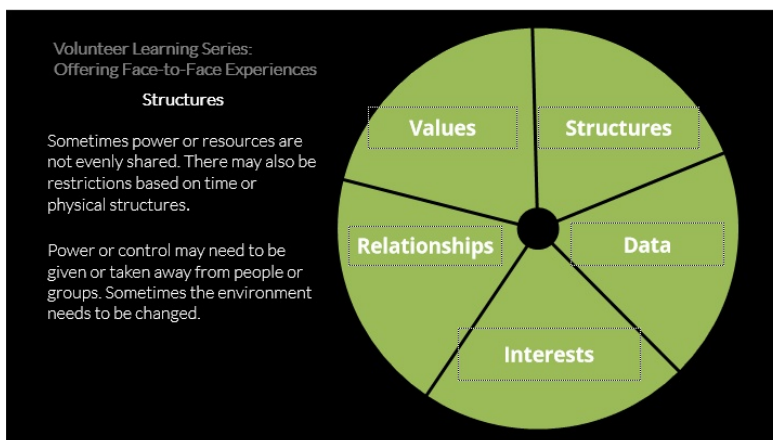
1.32 CIRCLE OF CONFLICT

Notes:

The Circle of Conflict is another tool to help you climb down the ladder and understand what factors might be causing differences between you and the other person. Click on each of the five causes to learn more.
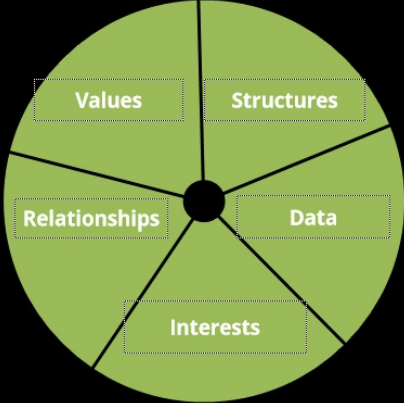
structures (Slide Layer)

data (Slide Layer)

interests (Slide Layer)

relationships (Slide Layer)

values (Slide Layer)

1.33 A

Notes:

As mentioned, we can't infer people's intentions, many times we need to ask questions to learn. When approaching another person in conflict, use open-ended questions to allow them to share and avoid beginning with "why". Why can trigger defensiveness as can phrases like "what's your problem?" Instead, offer to share their feedback so they feel heard.

You also may ask an unrelated question if the conversation is escalating to allow a moment to reset.

1.34 A
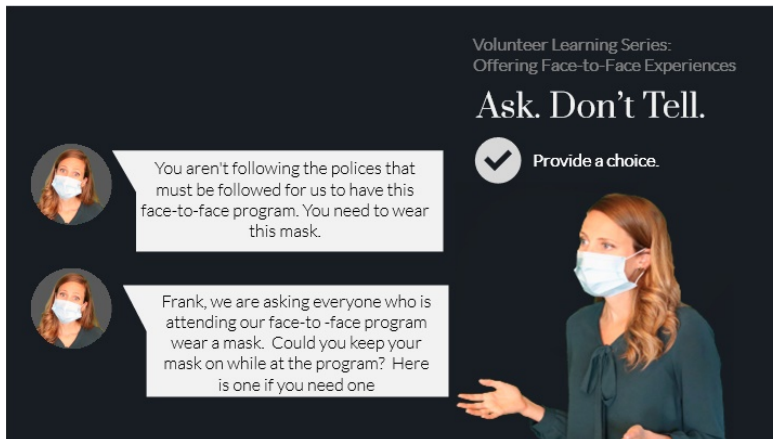
Notes:

People are more likely to comply with a policy if they are asked rather than told. People appreciate independence, the ability to choose and determine their own future. Giving someone options and allowing them to choose how they want to comply is generally received better than directly telling them to do something. Select which language Lindsey should use to encourage Frank to comply.

****

(good response)

Right. She asked him to put on a mask, instead of telling him. She also used his name, which is helpful to create a connection to the person.

****

(bad response)

You are more likely to get a negative response if you make a command, and tell someone they need to do something.

option1 (Slide Layer)
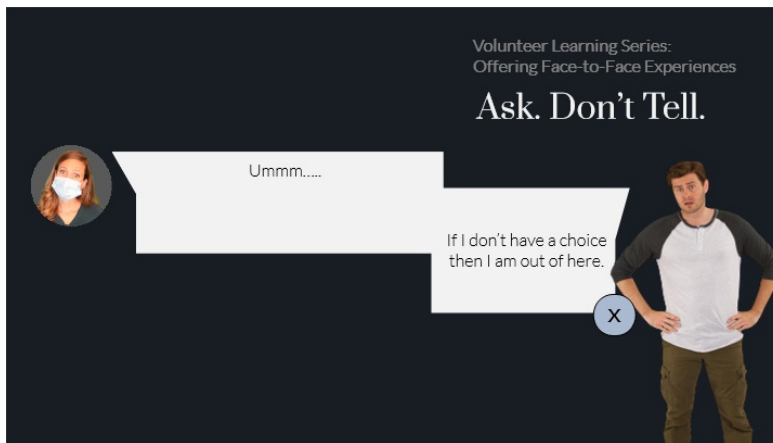
option2 (Slide Layer)
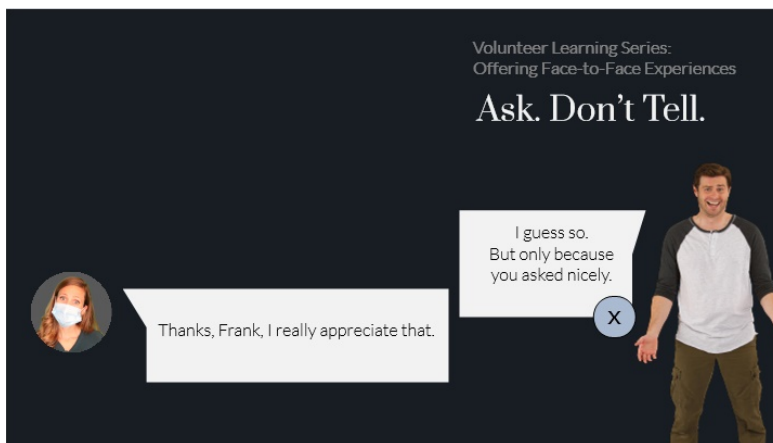
1.35 A
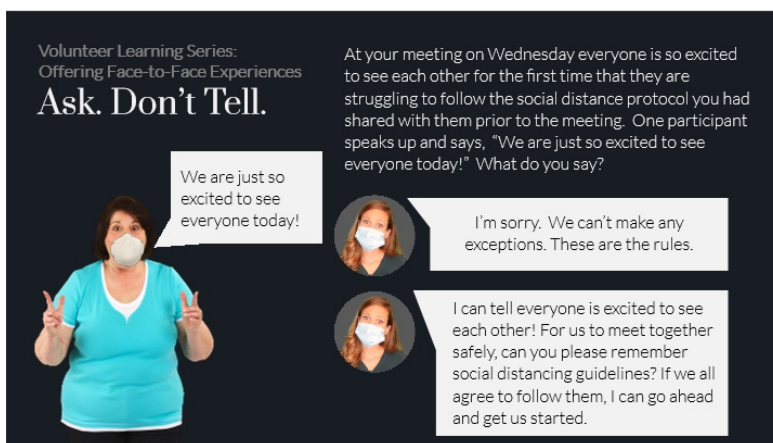
Notes:

You may have to intervene when well-intentioned participants aren't following protocols. Read this situation and choose the best response.

******

Option one: No, try again and remember to ask.

*****

Option two: Right. You validated their feelings and asked for compliance.

option1 (Slide Layer)

option2 (Slide Layer)

1.36 L

Notes:

The next step is L, for listening. You want to make sure you are listening to understand, using open body language and active listening skills. Let's look more are these concepts in the next section.

1.37 60/40 Layout

Notes:

When you listen to someone, you need to thinking about getting below the surface. What are the underlying motivators, their values or needs, behind what they are saying. "Interests explain why people care about an issue...what they deem important". Another way of thinking about it is understanding issue behind issue, sometimes this is called the "Song Beneath the Word."

The common example to illustrate this is a Lemon-if two people each want a lemon (but you only have one), rather than cutting the lemon in half, ask why does each person want the lemon. If one needs the juice and one needs the zest, it can be a win-win.

When we understand interests and recognize that for each position there may be multiple interests, we have a better chance of finding common ground.

1.38 Listening:

Body Language

Notes:

Body language can communicate a lot while we are listening.

We often mirror the gestures of the people we are speaking to. If you are talking to someone who is exasperated, with arms crossed, rolling their eyes, you may end up mirroring their body language.

 This can be a problem if they are angry, and it can escalate the situation.

Pay attention to your body language, and keep it open and neutral.
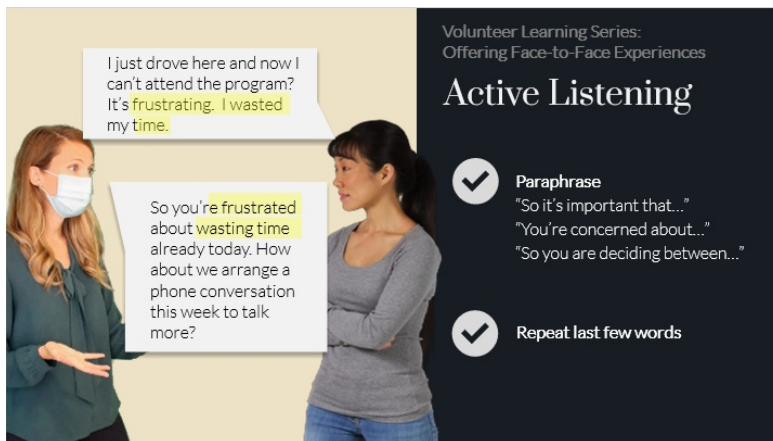
1.39 Listening:

Body Language

Notes:

Click on the information buttons to learn more about open and neutral body language.

1.40 Active Listening

Notes:

The goal of active listening is to "Demonstrate that they've been heard, not necessarily that you agree."

Sometimes people want to be heard even more than they want to win an argument. An important way to communicate you are listening, and to help you clearly understand their side, use active listening skills.

Paraphrase what the person has said. "So it's important to you that...." "so you're concerned about..." "so you are deciding between..." Whether or not you agree with them, paraphrasing tells them you are listening and allows you to correct any misunderstandings.

A simple thing you can do as well is repeat the last 3 or the 3 most important words that they said.

You do not want to interrupt, give advice, or discount their feelings. You want to show you here and acknowledge what they are saying. This does not have to mean you feel the same way.
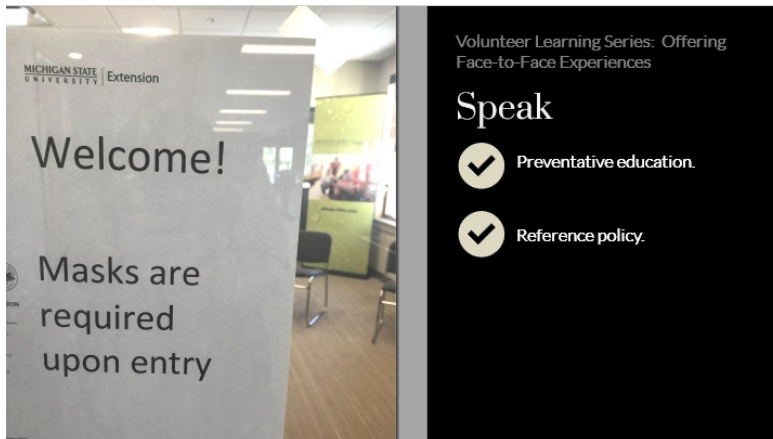
1.41 S- Speak

Notes:

How we treat people can make a difference.

Information rarely creates sustained changes in opinions and behavior.

But if the other person feels like you care or has a connection, the situation is less likely to escalate. For this reason, using somebody's name is a good idea.

1.42 S- Speak

Notes:

Having signage at your event/activity is another preventative measure. Make sure you know the most recent MSU Extensions policies and expectations related to face-to-face gatherings and use the materials that are provided to you. Then you can focus on educating rather than debating. Have clear signage so the polices are visible and provide information, When you explain the policy you may explain why it came about, but avoid phrase like "hey I don't make the rules!'. Clear and concise explanations work the best.

1.43 S for Speak and Share

 (Pick One, 10 points, unlimited attempts permitted)
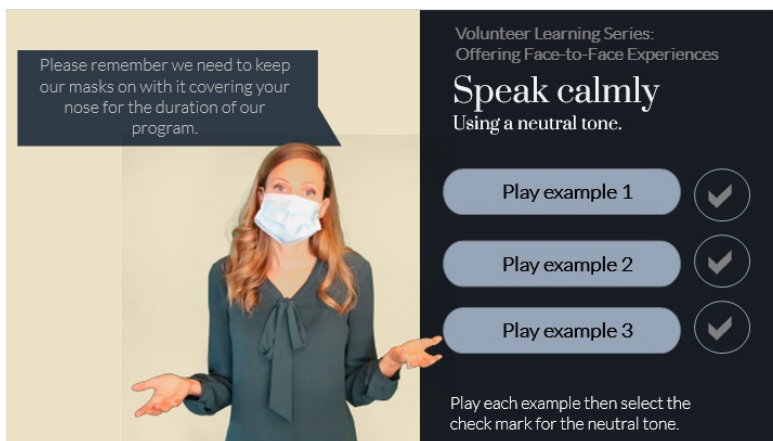
Correct	Choice
	a

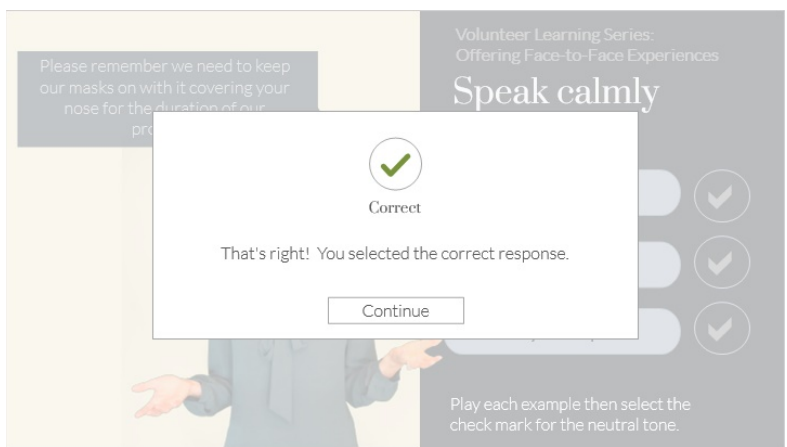|	
X	a
	a

Feedback when correct:

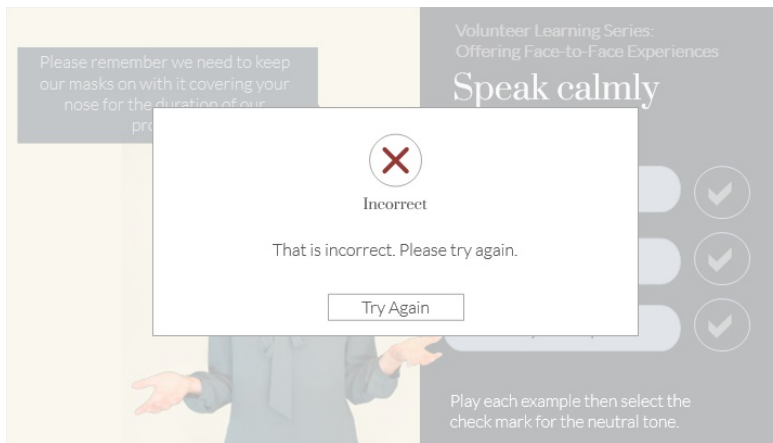That's right! You selected the correct response.

Notes:

You also need to be cautious of your tone. Make sure you don't sound parental, accusatory, or condescending. Play each audio response here. Which one is neutral?

Correct (Slide Layer)

Try Again (Slide Layer)

1.44 End

Notes:

This is challenging, and every situation will be unique. Above all be sure to prioritize safety, and get help.

Make sure you reach out to your local MSU Extension Professional after a program that had conflict or program participants refusing to follow the current policy.

And finally, allow people to act on their own behalf even if you disagree.

Before exiting the course, please use the Resources link to explore materials and websites mentioned in here. Make sure you click on the "Mark Complete" button so we know you have completed this module.

Please reach out to local MSU Extension Professional to inform them that you have read through this training resource. This will allow for them to mark your Volunteer Central Profile as completing this training.