Communication Activity

Objectives: This is an activity to help team members understand the importance of effective communication skills for establishing a Shared Mental Model, including providing clear instructions and feedback, asking good questions and listening effectively.

Preparation: Make copies of the diagram on the next pages. Have blank paper and pens available.

Instructions: Have participants pair up. Ask each pair to decide who will be the Sender and who will be the Receiver. Give each Sender a copy of the diagram. Give each Receiver a blank piece of paper and pen.

Participant Instructions:

Senders and Receivers should sit back-to-back so they can’t see each other. Senders will verbally describe the diagram to their partners, and Receivers will attempt to draw the diagram. Receivers may not talk and may not ask any questions. You have five minutes.

(Announce when five minutes has elapsed and debrief with participants)

*Round One debrief: How did you do? What worked well? What problems did you encounter? What does this remind you of in our workplace?*

(Round Two) Please switch roles. Senders are now Receivers and Receivers are now Senders. Senders, turn your diagram upside down. Only one change in the rules: Senders and Receivers may both ask and answer questions. Begin!

(Announce when five minutes has elapsed and debrief with participants)

*Round Two debrief: How did asking and answering questions help? When would it be helpful to ask more questions or provide more information in our workplace? Were you better able to achieve a Shared Mental Model this time around?*