AND NOT BUT

The And Not But activity helps us to reflect on the simple words we use to communicate, and how these can impact a conversation. "But" is an interesting word in communication. It is a minimizing word that detracts from, and qualifies, the statement before it. By replacing the word "but" with "and," communication can have a more positive and powerful feel. Our choice of words and responses can frame a conversation and help us to communicate more effectively.

10-15 minutes

Minimum of 2

None

DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

In both planning sessions you were using the word "yes."

- How did it feel when you were planning your trip using "yes, but?" Now, how did it feel when you were planning your trip using "yes, and?"
- Did you feel the flow of the conversation change when you used "and" instead of "but?" If yes, how did it change?
- How can we change our language and framing around issues to communicate more effectively in health care?
- Where can you embed this change in your day-to-day work or activities? What's one thing you could try in the coming week?

By replacing the word "but" with "and," communication can have a more positive and powerful feel. "But" often acts as a minimizing word that detracts from, and qualifies, the statement before it.

WHAT TO DO

1. In partners, plan a vacation with one partner using only "yes, but" after each statement.

2. One partner will start the conversation with a statement and then the second partner will follow with a statement starting with "yes, but." For example:

   Partner 1: We are going on a trip to Hawaii and we are going to go to Maui.
   Partner 2: Yes, but I can't go next week as I have a work meeting.
   Partner 1: That's okay – we can switch the time.
   Partner 2: Yes, but I don't like Hawaii.

3. After a few minutes of planning your trip using "yes, but," switch and repeat the exercise above using nothing but "yes, and."

4. One partner will start the conversation with a statement and then the second partner will follow with a statement starting only with "yes, and." For example:

   Partner 1: We are going on a trip to Hawaii and we are going to go to Maui.
   Partner 2: Yes, and we are going to go to the beach every day.
   Partner 1: Yes, and we are going to go snorkelling.

5. After a few minutes of planning your trip using "yes, and", debrief on the language used and how it felt using "and" versus "but."

COUNTING TOGETHER

Not all activities work better when you try very hard and push them along. Sometimes, it is better to go slow to go fast, and providing gentle attention to something can get a task done more quickly by allowing you to be more adaptive.

☰	⚙
🕓	10 minutes
👤	10-20
✏	None

Source: Adapted from Eye Openers

DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

Often when situations are vague, people want to control things and set rules to structure how they happen. Sometimes, trying very hard to succeed puts pressure on the process and can actually be counter-productive. However, not setting rules can often result in a messy or unpredictable process. Even though you might get to 20 quickly when you set rules, doing so misses the point of this exercise. The key is learning to be comfortable with ambiguity and letting a process/solution emerge naturally on its own.

- How did the activity feel?
- What happened when it didn't work?
- What happened when it worked?
- How can letting a process emerge on its own help in the work we do?

WHAT TO DO

1. Get participants to stand in a circle.

2. Ask the group to collectively count from 1 to 20 out loud, with each member of the group saying only one number at a time. So, one person will start with "one" and someone else in the group will say "two".

3. It is important to note that participants cannot set a particular order in which they speak, and cannot communicate to plan the order in which they speak.

4. At any point in time, if two people speak at the same time, the group needs to start counting from "one" again.

5. Continue until you make it from 1 to 20 without any overlap of participants speaking at the same time. Make sure everyone has a chance to contribute at least once.

LOTS AND LOTS

This exercise provides an opportunity to be agile and adaptive while communicating. The hand gestures presented by the partners force the story to take a different direction than it might have otherwise taken. Often, when we are leading change, outside forces may come along unexpectedly. Being able to adapt in these situations will contribute to our success with whatever we are working on.

5-10 minutes

Pairs

None

DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- What was difficult about this exercise? Did anyone stumble while telling their story?
- Who successfully told their story using the five senses?
- Who shifted their story according to the hand gesture delivered?

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask participants to come up with hand gestures that signify the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch). For example, pinching your nose may signify "smell."

2. Divide participants into pairs.

3. Assign one member of each team to be the storyteller and another to deliver hand gestures to influence the direction of the story.

4. Have the storyteller make up a story starting with "There once was a boy who was lost in the woods…"

5. While the story is being told, the other team member will help direct the story by giving the storyteller different hand gestures.

6. The storyteller must shift the description of the story according to the hand gestures being presented. For example, if their partner pinches their nose, they may say "but there was a strange smell in the woods."

7. As you work through the story, try to direct the story by using all the hand gestures.

8. After one round, ask participants to switch roles and play again.

MAKE A TEAM WITH...

In this activity, team members must act quickly to form small teams based on instructions that you shout out. The aim is to strengthen communication and help teach participants to "think on their feet" when needing to make quick decisions.

☰	⚙ ⚙ ⚙
🕐	15-20 minutes
👤	Minimum of 10
✏	None

DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- How did you communicate during this activity?
- What communication strategies worked well?
- What communication strategies did not work well?
- What communication strategies could we embed into our day-to-day environments to help make communication more effective?
- Were you surprised by what you had in common in the room?
- Were you surprised by differences in the room?

1. Explain to participants that they will have to form a team based on the instructions that you shout out. For example, some instructions could include getting into a team with people who have the same number of children as you, or getting into a team with people who are born in the same month as you.

2. As the facilitator, shout out the instructions for the team request. Encourage participants to work as quickly as possible.

3. Once a team is complete (i.e. all the people in the room with two children have come together), participants can shout out or sit down to signal that their team is finished.

4. Repeat the exercise as many times as you want.

RIPPLE EFFECT

This activity demonstrates how you can have a system-wide effect by touching only one element in a system. Sometimes, in isolation, it can be difficult to see that everything we touch has the potential to cause a ripple effect throughout our system. As you embark on your journey of change and transition, what are the implications for the system you work in?

☰ ✿	
⏱	10-15 minutes
👤	Minimum OF 30
✐	Space large enough for the group to move around

DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- What did you observe during this activity?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How does this relate to your work?

In his book The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization, Peter Senge offered this simple, yet profound axiom: "Small changes can produce big results – but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious." Here, he refers to what systems thinkers call "leverage points" – well-timed, well-placed actions that can produce significant, lasting improvements/changes. Most people immediately grasp the concept of leverage points, but to spot them in an actual system is often more difficult. This exercise quickly illustrates the concept of leverage points through concrete changes made to the group's structure when one person is moved.

1. Have participants stand up.

2. Have them look around the room and secretly select two people. Tell them not to reveal who they have picked!

3. Instruct participants that when you say "go" they should try to make an equidistant triangle with those two people. That means they should stand so there is an equal distance between them and each of the two people selected. For example, if I picked you and you, I would stand somewhere around here; if one of you moves, I also have to move with you to keep the equidistant triangle intact

4. Instruct participants that they are to stick to their original two people throughout this activity. They must keep the triangle intact. No talking. No touching! Okay, get into position.

5. Once they have had a few minutes to get into place, instruct participants that you are going to touch one of them on the shoulder and move them to a new location.

6. Instruct everyone that they must all try to maintain their equidistant triangles as this person is moved.

7. Repeat the exercise 2-3 times.

STEP BACK

Often, in our work and in our lives, we don't have the opportunity to stop and truly reflect on what we are doing and what we could change. This exercise provides an opportunity to reflect on the shifts that can happen in adaptive systems, and the importance of pausing, taking a step back, and reflecting on what we are doing and how we could do it better.

15 minutes

Groups of 6-8 (can have multiple groups)

5-6 differently-sized balls per group

Source: Unknown

DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

Often, in the work we do, we get into patterns of doing activities. In the whirlwind of everything that is going on, we often don't have the opportunity to pause, reflect on what we are doing, and question if it could be done differently. Established patterns may not work when workload increases.

- How often do you stop to be curious about what you are doing?
- How often do you take a "bird's-eye" or "balcony" view of your work?
- How could you apply the learning from this activity in your day-to-day work?

Adaptive systems are constantly changing, so this exercise serves to emphasize the importance of taking a "view from the balcony" – so we can take a high-level view of what is happening and identify opportunities for improvement.

WHAT TO DO

1. Have participants stand in a closed circle. (Note: If the group is very large, it may be necessary to split people up into smaller groups.) Assign a facilitator for each group.

2. Facilitators start by throwing the ball to someone in the circle and saying their name as the ball is thrown.

3. Have participants continue catching and throwing the ball to establish a pattern for the group. (Each person must remember who they receive the ball from and who they have thrown it to.)

4. Once everyone has received the ball and a pattern is established, introduce more balls, so there are always several balls being thrown at the same time – still following the set pattern.

5. Continue this process until the throwing becomes impossible or someone stops the group to pause.