Supplies Needed

Note: Supplies to do the activity may not be available for all participants. Select two or three participants to engage in the activity and share as a group if you do not have sufficient supplies for all to engage in the activity.

- Sunglasses with yellow lenses
- Phone book
- Pen/pencil and paper

Activity Description

Imagine you are at a public phone in the mall and you need to look up three phone numbers. Other people are waiting in line to use the phone and they are rudely requesting you to hurry up. (Hint: Other participants in the group could role play as the impatient and discourteous people waiting to use the phone.). Put on the sunglasses and stand at a table to do the following:

- Find the names of three people on a telephone book page.

- Write down the phone numbers as quickly as you can.

Discussion Items

- Was the activity difficult for you? Why?

- How did you feel when you were looking up the phone numbers?

- Did you become frustrated when others were anxious for you to finish?
Supplies Needed

Note: Supplies to do this activity are available on the lesson CD. Copies of the “Unfair Hearing Test” audio files are on the lesson CD and may be played or downloaded to play from that source.

- The “Unfair Hearing Test” audio tape or CD (Note: Audio files for the “Unfair Hearing Test” are on the lesson CD and can be played from it)
- Tape recorder or CD player
- Pen/pencil and paper

Activity Description

Prepare the materials needed and select the activity “one-word” sound test (play this audio file). Ask the participants to number a piece of paper from 1 to 10 or simply use the handout provided.

As you play the sounds on the audio tape, ask participants to write down what they believe is being said. The tape will go through the words three times, using different hearing losses each time (Series A, series B, series C).

Discussion Items

- Ask the participants to identify the words, then discuss what this could mean when conversing with someone.

- Ask participants how they would compensate in the conversation if they could understand only about a quarter of the words.

(Hint: Do the exercise again adding different background noises and discuss the effects of the noises.)
# The Unfair Hearing Test

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Answers

1. Fill
2. Catch
3. Thumb
4. Heap
5. Wise
6. Wedge
7. Fish
8. Shows
9. Dead
10. Juice
The Smell of Chocolate

Supplies Needed

• Chocolate kiss candies, one per participant

Activity Description

Give each person a chocolate kiss candy, asking them not to eat it until you tell them to do so. Ask them to unwrap the candy. Now each person should pinch the nostrils of their nose while eating the candy.

Ask participants to describe the taste. Because they can’t smell the chocolate, it should have little to no taste. Explain that this is similar to what happens as we age. When we can’t smell the food, it doesn’t have the same appealing taste, either.

Discussion Items

• What implications could this have for individuals regarding diet and nutrition?

• How will this activity help you relate to older people in real-life situations?

• Could loss of taste or smell affect how older individuals interact with others socially?
Making Sense of Sensory Losses as We Age

Touch and Dexterity

Supplies Needed

Note: Supplies to do the activity may not be available for all participants. Select a number of participants to engage in the activity and share as a group if you do not have sufficient supplies for all to engage in the activity. Also, class leaders may set up several activity “stations” where individuals can rotate among tasks and take turns as needed for doing this activity.

- transparent tape
- gardening gloves
- coin purse with play money
- medicine bottle with colored buttons (or candy)
- deck of playing cards
- 12 inches of ribbon or string
- amber or yellow glasses

Activity Description

Place transparent tape around each of your upper finger joints so your fingers will feel stiff. Place a glove on each hand so you feel as if you have a reduced sense of touch. Once you have the transparent tape and gloves on your hands, complete up to four routine tasks. The tasks include:

1. Tie the ribbon into a bow.
2. Use the coin purse to count out change for an item.
3. Shuffle cards.
4. Open a medicine bottle. Count out two pills (buttons, etc.).

Discussion Items

- How did you feel during these activities?
- Were the routine tasks difficult for you? Explain your feelings.
- How do these activities help you relate to older people in real-life situations?
- How can you use what you learned in this activity?
Activity Description

Ask participants to place their hand on a flat surface, palm side down, with fingers spread. Next, instruct them to pinch the skin on the back of their hand, counting to five, then release the pinch and count how long the skin takes to return to normal.

Discussion Items

• Ask for several volunteers to tell the group how long it took. (If possible, get volunteers from various age groups.)

• Explain to the participants that when we are in our teens and 20s, we may not even be able to count to one before our skin is back in place, but as we age, the skin takes longer to return to its normal state.

• For some people in their 80s and 90s, the skin may take as much as 10 minutes to subside, and then they may notice bruising the next day from this simple activity.