

# Chinese Whispers

This activity can help to increase understanding about the need to communicate directly instead of relying on second-hand information or rumours.

**This exercise can be used as a fun way to introduce new workshop topics.**

## Time Required

This exercise should take about 10 minutes

## What to do

1. The facilitator chooses a short sentence. It is best to choose a sentence that is related to the workshop material. For example:  
“This system is in danger, but we can save it if we work together.”
2. The participants form a large circle and the facilitator starts by whispering the statement to the first participant.
3. This participant whispers the statement to the person next to them and so on throughout the whole group.
4. At the end the last person announces the message they heard and the facilitator writes this up on a board or flip chart. Then the facilitator writes down what the original message was - invariably the message has changed dramatically as it passes from ear to ear.
5. At this stage the facilitator explains that when we want to gather information we must talk directly to the source and not simply rely on information that we have heard by way of rumour or through others.

## Facilitator's Tips

- Participants are not allowed to say the message more than once
- The message needs to be whispered so that other participants do not hear
- The trick is to start with a sentence that is not too long