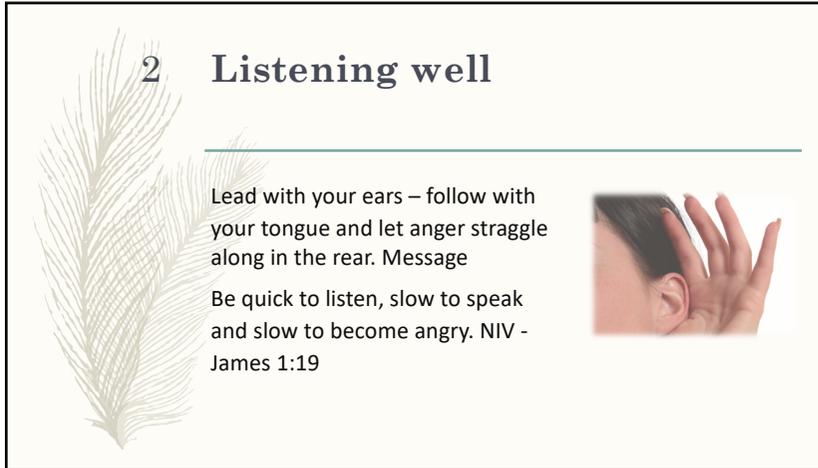


Listening Well

Training for
Telephone
Listening Services

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TED

1



2 Listening well

Lead with your ears – follow with your tongue and let anger straggle along in the rear. Message

Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. NIV - James 1:19



2



3 Listening well

Answering before listening is both stupid and rude.

Message - Proverbs 18:13



3



4 Learning overview

- Barriers to good communication
- Unhelpful listening habits
- Helpful listening qualities
- Helpful listening process
- Useful tips
- Follow up
- Supervision

4

5 Interpersonal Communication

- Tone of voice = 38% of total communication
- Gesture, action, facial expression and posture = 55%
- Verbal communication (the words we speak) = 7%
- Good communication happens when all three aspects of communication work together in harmony.
- **However, when you are a telephone listener, you only have your words and tone of voice to help you communicate your care and concern for the speaker.**

5

6 What stops us communicating at deeper levels?

- Deep communication takes time and patience.
- We may need to give lots of attention to the person who is speaking.
- We may fear embarrassment/rejection when we talk about our thoughts and feelings.
- We don't know how to find the words to express our complex feelings and ideas.

6

7 What stops us communicating at deeper levels?

- We have different communication styles.
- We have different cultural and familial expectations of communication and what is ok and not ok to talk about.
- We may have encountered unhelpful responses from others when we tried to talk at a deeper level.

7

8 Hearing but not listening

- Too often we are **hearing** people, but we are not really **listening** to them
- Being heard can be very healing.
- Being heard gives people significance, value and respect.
- When someone listens to us well, we often feel calmer, and we are less likely to get into a heated argument.
- When someone listens to us we feel cared for.

8

9 **Unhelpful listening**

When you interrupt me
I feel frustrated.



9

10 **Unhelpful listening**

When you look away I
feel unimportant.



10

11 **Unhelpful listening**

When you ignore me
I feel rejected.



11

12 **Unhelpful listening**

When you give me
unasked for advice
I feel small.



12

13 **Unhelpful listening**

When you insist on telling your story I feel unheard.



13

14 **The unspoken questions under many people's concerns are...**

- Do you really care about me?
- Are you able to understand what I am feeling right now? Can you empathise with me?
- Are you willing and able to support me when I am struggling?
- Can I depend on you/trust you?
- **The way that we listen can help people to feel cared for, understood, and supported.**

14

15 **Helpful listening**

When you give me eye contact, and time to talk, I feel special.



15

16 **Helpful listening**

When you ask questions to make sure you understand what I am saying, I feel connected.



16

17 **Helpful listening**

When you recognise and accept my feelings, I feel your care.



17

18 **Helpful listening**

When you show you understand, I feel valued.



18

19 **Helpful listening**

When you give me an open space to talk freely, you give me an amazing gift.



19

20 **Listening well**

Lead with your ears – follow with your tongue...
Message - James 1:19



20

21 As listeners we need to...

- Know our own strengths and weaknesses (**self-awareness**).
- Recognise our own emotions and reactions, and notice how they affect our thoughts and behaviours.
- Manage, control, and adapt our emotions, mood, reactions, and responses.
- Make necessary changes to habits and thinking (**self-management**)
- Initiate and follow through on our commitments.

21

22 Listen humbly

- Honour others above yourself (Romans 12:10)
- Understand that other people are doing the best they can in very difficult circumstances and affirm them for what they are doing. Be filled with wonder for those who call you.
- Do not judge the callers. It is your job to listen with love and acceptance and support them in their crisis, not judge their lifestyle, language or behaviour.

22

23 Developing deeper communication - loving respect

- Listen appreciatively and listen through positive and loving ears – believe the best about each other (Philippians 4:8)
- Honour one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10)



23

24 Preparing to listen well

- Be ready for the phone call.
- Wait for it to ring 2-3 times.
- Pray, breathe, focus on the caller even before you speak.
- Prepare to be a channel of God's love into their life as you listen and respond with care and kindness.
- Smile – it can make your voice sound warmer.
- Focus totally on the needs of the caller. Imagine their face.
- Take notes to help you pay attention to the details.

24

25 **Give good eye contact or your full attention**

- Eye-contact shows that you are **interested** in the speaker and what they want to say.
- Give 100% eye contact if you are the listener and 50% if you are the speaker.
- If you cannot see the person, picture them in your mind as you listen.
- Write brief notes to remind you what they have said, and to help you pay attention.



25

26 **Respond by summarizing what they said:**

- So you're saying that...?
- And then ... happened?
- This shows how well you are **listening**.

26

27 **Be curious**

- Ask questions that invite more information and ideas.
- This shows that you have thought about their story.
- It also shows that their story is **important** to you and you want to hear more.



27

28 **Listening with empathy**

Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.

Pema Chödrön
The Places That Scare You

28

29 Listen to their story with your heart as well as your mind

- Respond to their emotions and imagine what they are feeling.
- 'That sounds really sad, frightening, troubling, painful, discouraging, etc.'
- 'I wonder what you were feeling at that time?'
- This shows that you **care** about their feelings.



29

30 Listen to their story with your heart as well as your mind

- 'I'm sorry that you went through that experience. It sounds quite sad/challenging/frightening/painful.'
- 'It is sad that you had to go through that experience alone.'

30

31 Listening well – match their emotional tone

Rejoice with those who rejoice
and mourn with those who mourn.

Romans 12:15



31

32 Listen for relational needs

- Comfort/consolation; acceptance/grace/forgiveness; affection/kindness; appreciation/gratitude; attention; respect; encouragement; security/safety; specialness; support/help.
- Check out any possible relational needs. 'It sounds as if you might need some extra support – Who might be able to help you?' 'That sounds really sad. I wonder who would like to comfort you if they knew how sad you're feeling?'

32

33 How can I help?

- Ask the person what kind of help they most need...
- ...and then do something practical if possible.
- Or refer them to an organisation that is better equipped to deal with their needs – don't feel you have to solve all their problems.



33

34 Explore their challenges

- How have you tried to solve this problem in the past? What challenges did you face?
- When were you able to manage the problem best? What did you learn from that experience?



34

35 Explore their challenges

- How is this problem affecting your life, and other people's lives, right now?
- What is stopping you from reaching your goals?
- If these obstacles were like blocks on a road, how else could you get to your destination?

35

36 Help them make clear requests for help or change – if necessary

- In this specific situation...
- When this specific things happens...
- I feel...because...
- And it would really help me if you would...
- So I can help you by...
- What ideas do you have for how we can solve this together?

36

37 Help them make clear requests for help or change – if necessary

- When I see the house looking all messy
- I feel frustrated,
- Because I spend so much time trying to keep it tidy.
- So it would really help me if you would tidy your things away by the end of the day.
- And then I will have more time to spend with you.
- What ideas do you have for how we can keep the house tidy?

37

38 Spiritual support

- Prayer may or may not be appropriate.
- You can say: “I am happy to pray for you, if you would like me to.”
- Any prayers should be short; caring/comforting; in simple, everyday language; and focused on the caller’s immediate needs. The prayer can also be used to remind them of God’s loving care for them at this time.
- See suggested script for sample prayer.

38

39 Use your body to help you remember how to listen

- Eyes** – If possible - give eye contact to show you are interested.
- Ears** – Listen with your ears – really listen.
- Mouth** – Ask curious questions to show you are interested and want to hear more, and to reflect back what you have heard.
- Mind** – Imagine what their experience is like for them.
- Heart** – Hear their emotions, identify and name the feelings, and respond to them. Listen for their relational needs.
- Hands** – If appropriate, ask what kind of help they need most, and then help them to access the most appropriate support. This may be being available to hear them again next week.

39

40 Listening well

Say only what helps, each word a gift.

Ephesians 4:29 Message



40

41 **Follow up**

- Do anything you promised to do.
- Check in by phone, text, etc.
- Ask what else you could do for them.



41

42 **Reflecting on listening skills**

- List three things you are already doing well in the way you listen to others.
- List three things you will do differently to make your listening even more effective.
- Think of at least one person you need to listen to more effectively this week and practice your skills.

42

43 **Abusive Clients**

- A small minority of clients may be abusive and hurtful.
- Although that may come as a shock it's important to be prepared.
 - Respond in a thoughtful way, not in an emotional way.
 - A calm response may calm the client.
 - You may use it as a tool in the conversation: "I can hear you are frustrated. What could be the reason for that?"

43

44 **Abusive Clients**

- The client has no right to hurt you or offend. You have every right to set clear boundaries.
 - "I don't like the way you speak to me. If you choose to continue talking like that, I will have to end this conversation".

44

45 Suicidal risk factors

- Expresses a wish to die or that life is not worth living
- Hopelessness
- Isolation
- Impulsive behaviour

45

46 Suicidal risk factors

History of:

- substance abuse/mental illness/phys. or sex. abuse/prior attempts or suicide in family

Recent loss:

- Job/Health/Relationships etc.

Behaviour that indicates preparation for leaving life:

- Saying goodbye, making a will or funeral plans, giving away valuables

46

47 Don't be afraid to talk/ask about suicide

- You're not initiating the idea!
- Suicide might be the only option they can see.
- They might feel like they are doing other people a favour.
- If you're worried, ask them direct questions:
 - Do they think life is not worth living?
 - Have they thought about how they would commit suicide?
 - Have they made formal plans?
 - *Gathered materials: rope/hose/firearms/medicine etc.*
 - Have they ever attempted suicide before?...

47

48 How to respond if you think the person is suicidal

- Ask what keeps them from committing a suicide
- Talk about how valuable they are
- Ask them about how their relatives might feel if they died
- Have them promise you that they won't harm themselves in any way until you meet again
- Scale of 1-10 / suicidal – happy. Call you before next session if they reach 3.
- Call those that can respond to the person immediately if you are afraid of them harming themselves.

48

49 Keeping notes / GDPR

- Keeping notes is important for later follow up.
- **General Data Protection Regulation** in Europe forbids any record keeping of personal information without the person's consent.
- You need permission from the client to keep notes.
- Keep notes only with reference numbers.
- Keep a separate list with names and phone numbers with reference numbers.
- Keep any computer files encrypted so no-one can enter except you.

49

50 Recording and referring

- Make a record of each call so that you can see who is calling, and the kinds of topics that they are talking about.
- This record can help you to plan for and train more listeners, and to create handouts on frequent topics that can be shared on your website.
- Know when to refer people for more specialised help. Don't think you have to have the answers for everything. It's not possible. You're human too.
- Help your local team to create a useful list of links, phone numbers and resources. Keep it updated in case services need to shut down, or there are changes.

50

51 Supervision

- Anyone listening to other people's stories, challenges, and painful emotions needs to have "supervision".
- Supervision is a meeting when you can talk about how listening to others is affecting you, to make sure that you stay safe and healthy, too.
- It's a time to ask questions and support each other.
- It is a time when a more experienced person can help you to reflect on your listening and develop your skills.
- Each listening organisation needs to work out their own supervisory arrangements with a trained professional.

51

52 Finally...

- Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
Colossians 3:12
- That is God's calling for us as we listen to others and become channels of His love into their hurting lives.

52

53 **Thank you for listening today!**

May every word you speak be a gift
for those who listen.

Watch the way you speak. It helps, and it
hurts.

Ephesians 5:2



53

54 **Any questions?**



54