

Listening Activity

Five Key Components of Reflective Listening

Bellringer:

Think of one or two of the best listeners in your life, people you enjoy talking to and help you deal with your issues. How important have they been to you? What are the things that make them such great listeners? Write at least three things down on a piece of paper.

Step 1: Encouragement

Encourage the speaker to keep talking by letting them know you are listening. Make direct eye contact. Use open, receptive body language. Nod your head, and make comments that encourage further communication such as "Ok, go on."

Step 2: Questioning

Ask clarifying questions in order to make sure you understand what the speaker is saying. For example if the speaker said "That kid just made me feel so stupid!" you might say "It sounds like you're pretty upset. Did something happen?"

Step 3: Reflecting

Listen for the underlying emotion. For example if the speaker said "My boyfriend acts like such a jerk!" you might say "You sound mad" or "You sound frustrated."

Step 4: Paraphrasing

Paraphrase what the speaker is saying, repeating the statement in question form. For example if the speaker said "My husband never listens to me!" you might say "You feel like John doesn't listen very well?"

Step 5: Empathy and Speaker Solution

Approach the conversation with the belief that the speaker has the ability to solve the problem for themselves. Resist the temptation to offer advice, or give opinions about what the speaker is saying. Instead ask questions such as "So how will you deal with that?" and "What do you think can/should be done about this situation?"

Listening Breakout:

You have been divided into groups of three. Each of you has a number within the group. We will breakup into our groups and will each take turns with each of the three roles.

The Three Roles

1. **Speaker:** Talk with the listener about something for a least 5 minutes. It

even someone you care about that is doing something that puts them in danger.

2. **Listener:** Sit and listen to the speaker. Demonstrate excellent listening skills and try to model the components of reflective listening. A good listener will have their speaker really going and will have to work hard to close within 5 minutes. Pay attention to your eye contact, body language, encouragement and all the reflective skills.
3. **Coach:** Watch the listener. (This is a good time to chew the gumball to remind yourself of your role and to evaluate and coach / not talk). Look to find evidence of good listening skills and write down notes. When I rotate the groups, share your feedback with the listener. Focus on positive listening skills you saw and a little corrective feedback on ones you think they could do better.

Coach Checklist

- **Body Language**
(open/ eye contact/ relaxed and interested)
- **Encouragement**
(Head nods, eyebrow movements, encouraging comments: go on, uh huh, yes etc)
- **Questioning**
(Ask open ended and clarifying questions to keep the conversation going and clarify meaning)
- **Reflecting Emotion**
(Listen for the feelings behind the words and clarify if that is what they are feeling)
- **Paraphrase**
(Use summary statements to help close one part and move to the next, or to clarify an agreement on strategy the speaker has arrived)
- **Express Empathy and allow the speaker to solve issue**
Let the speaker solve the problem, express understanding of their feelings, give brief example of similar experience (careful not to say the same feeling)