Intended Audience

This facilitation is primarily designed for students and student groups. The activities in this lesson plan can be adapted to meet the needs of staff member in larger departments as well.

Learning Outcomes

Through participation in this training session, students will be able to:

* Students will be able to identify key terms related to active listening.
* Students will be able to practice active listening skills and identify comfort levels with active listening.
* Students will be able to deconstruct social and cultural barriers around active listening.

Sharing Content

The content for this lesson can be shared many ways. If PowerPoints feel more comfortable, then this lesson can be converted to fit the needs of a PowerPoint format. This lesson can also be used as an outline for a discussion.

Exercises and Activities

This lesson includes two activities to practice active listening, various group discussions, a handout as a visual, and a video.

Facilitation Guide

**Section 1: Telephone Activity                 (Time: 10 Minutes)**

**Activity (5 Minutes)**

1. Players must sit/stand in a circle or in a straight line. They need to be close enough that whispering is possible, but not so close that players can hear each other whisper.
2. The first person in the line or circle whispers a word or phrase into the ear of the person sitting or standing to their right.The person delivering the word or phrase cannot repeat.
3. Players whisper the phrase to their neighbors until it reaches the last player in line.
4. The last player says the word or phrase out loud so everyone can hear how much it has changed from the first whisper at the beginning of the circle or line.

**Debrief (5 minutes)**

Have students gather back into a group for debrief. Ask the following questions and allow for discussion:

* How did that activity feel? What seemed easy and what seemed difficult?
* Why do you think the word/phrase altered the way that it did by the end?
* If you could change this activity, what would you change in order to have more successful results?
* How might this activitiy relate to active listening?

**Section 2: Active Listening Introduction                       (Time: 10 Minutes)**

1. **Show video:** “Active Listening: How to be a Great Listener.” See resources for video link.
2. After video ends, ask students to take one minute to think about the video: “What words, ideas, phrases, or concepts stood out to you?”
3. Then, have students pair up with the person next to them and share the ideas or thoughts they took away from the viedeo.
4. After pairing, have students share out with the larger group the ideas of thoughts that stood out to them.

Facilitator note: Take note of keywords such as “silence,” “paraphrasing,” “repeating,” “summarize,” and “asking questions.” These are key terms that will be discussed.

**Section 3: Active Listening Terms, Tips, and Techniques (Time: 10-15 Minutes)**

* **Provide students article:** “Become a Better Listener: Active Listening.” Give them five to seven minutes to look over the article and pull out larger key points. Make note to have them pay attention to vocabulary, ideas that may be unfamiliar, or concepts they already know.
  + Make sure to highlight the importance of good questioning, restating, summarizing, and body language.
* **Refer Students to Handout:** “Active Listening Tips and Techniques” As you discuss the article, this can be a helpful visual.
* **Then, bring students back together and discuss the article:** 
  + What points stood out?
  + What are some terms or ideas that are new or familiar?
  + How might these ideas be important?
  + Have you witnessed these concepts in your own life?

**Section 4: The Good and Bad of Active Listening                                                 (Time: 15 minutes)**

* **Show the following two videos:** “Teaching Dwight Active Listening,” and “Xbox vs PS”
  + Open discussion:
    - What went wrong?
    - What skills were not used or were used improperly?
    - How might this communication not be helpful for someone who needs a listening ear?
* **Then, show the following video:** “Everybody Loves Raymond Uses Active Listening”
  + Open discussion:
    - What went well?
    - What skills were used?
    - How might this communication be helpful or was helpful to someone who needs a listening ear?

**Section 5: Practice                        (Time: 10 minutes)**

* Have students split into pairs. The should choose a partner “A” and a partner “B.” Partner A has five minutes to discuss their favorite food. In those five minutes, the partner “B” will do their best to use active listening. Then, they will switch roles.

**Section 6: Reflection                        (Time: 5 minutes)**

* In a large group discussion have students discuss the following:
  + How did it feel to actively listen? How did it feel to have someone actively listen to you?
  + What is difficult about active listening? What is easy?
  + How might you be able to use what you’ve learned in your life?
  + In what ways will you continue practicing active listening?

**Facilitation Tools**

* Article: “Become a better listener”: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/become-a-better-listener-active-listening/>
* Handout: “Active Listening Tips and Techniques” (on last page of this packet)
* Teaching Dwight Active Listening: <https://vimeo.com/157447379>
* Xbox vs PS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a91T8MdXXMc>
* Everybody Loves Raymond Uses Active Listening: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VOubVB4CTU>

**Resources:**

Grohol, J. (2018). Become a better listener: Active listening. Retrieved November 9, 2019 from

https://psychcentral.com/lib/become-a-better-listener-active-listening/

Optimal Lifestyle. (2014). Active listening. How to be a great listener [Video File]. Retrieved

November 9, 2019 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_-rNd7h6z8>

Skillsyouneed.com. (2011). Active Listening. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>

**Active Listening Tips and Techniques**

**Non-Verbal Signs of Active Listening**

*This is a generic list of non-verbal signs of listening, in other words people who are listening are more likely to display at least some of these signs.  However these signs may not be appropriate in all situations and across all cultures.*

**Smile**

Small smiles can be used to show that you are paying attention to what is being said or a way of agreeing. Combined with nods of the head, smiles can be powerful in affirming that messages are being listened to and understood.

**Eye Contact**

It is normal and usually encouraging for the listener to look at the person talking. However, eye contact can sometimes be intimidating so gauge how much eye contact is appropriate based on your situation.

**Body Language**

Posture and body language in general is important during interpersonal interactions. The attentive listener tends to lean slightly forward or face their direction. Try not to get distracted fidgeting with your fingernails or looking at a clock or phone.

**Facial expressions**

Mirroring some of the speakers’ facial expressions can be a sign of attentive listening and show sympathy and empathy. Don’t get too carried away though.

**Verbal Signs of Active Listening**

*Caution should be used when using positive verbal reinforcement.*

**Positive Reinforcement**

While some positive words of encouragement may be beneficial to the speaker, the listener should use them sparingly so they don’t distract from what is being said.

**Remembering**

Attempt to remember the name of the speaker and then use their name when you talk to them. Remembering details, ideas, and concepts form previous conversations proves that you were paying attention.

**Clarifying through Questions**

The listener can show that they have been listening by asking relevant or clarifying questions to help build upon what the speaker has been saying.

**Reflecting**

Reflecting is closely repeating or paraphrasing what the speaker has said in order to show comprehension. This is a powerful skill that show understanding.

**Paraphrasing**

This includes repeating a brief summary of what was said in your own words. It involves taking the main points or the received mesafe and reiterating them in a clear way, giving the speaker the chance to correct if necessary.

Adapted from: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>