

# ACTIVE LISTENING

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Before starting the values activities, do these exercises with your group to develop their active listening skills. Once the group understands active listening, they will be able to better participate in all the values activities. It will help them listen to each other, learn from each other, feel confident to speak up and voice their thoughts and feelings, thus creating an inclusive, participatory and rich learning environment.

## Activity 1.1 Learning to Listen

Ask the participants if they can think of a time when someone really listened to them. Ask:



### Question



- How did you feel when you were being listened to?
- Would anyone like to share their memory of a time when someone really listened to them?

Instruct the group to find a partner; tell them to try and partner with someone who they do not know so well. In pairs, one person starts by telling their partner about something that is important to them. The other person is to listen. Then they swap roles.

Back in the large group, discuss with participants their experience. Ask:



### Question



- What did you notice in this exercise?
- How did your partner show that he/she was listening? What body language did he/she use?
- Or did you notice that they were not really listening? How could you tell?
- How did it feel when you were the listener? And when you were being listened to?

## Activity 1.2 Exercise with a tennis ball

Remind the group about some of the stories shared in the previous activity on being listened to. Highlight the ways that people felt when they were listened to. Explain that now they are going to learn how to engage in active listening. Say, active listening involves:

- Being attentive, facing the speaker (and making eye contact if this is appropriate);
- Repeating and summarizing what people tell you;
- Reflecting people's feelings;
- Not making judgments

### STEP 1

Ask the group to stand up and form a circle. You will need a ball that can be thrown across the circle. The facilitator should also join the circle. The facilitator starts by saying a short sentence that the participants listen to. For example, 'Sometimes, people say really horrible things about me.' The participants might respond by saying, 'Nobody likes it when other people say horrible things about you.' or 'You would feel sad when the other kids say horrible things to you.' Do this a few times until the group understands the exercise well.

### STEP 2

Now, all the participants will get involved. The first person will tell the group something they are worried about (for example, 'I'm a little worried I don't understand this game' or 'I'm worried about my Dad when he works so late'), then they will throw the ball to the second person. The second person will reflect the content and feeling of the first person before making their own statement and throwing the ball to another person. Depending on the size of the group you can do this for about 10 to 15 minutes.

Before finishing the session say that active listening is listening with our ears, eyes and heart. Sincere listening is being non-judgmental, open and being able to reflect the content and feelings of the speaker.

## Activity 1.3 Speaker, Listener and Observer

Divide participants into small groups of three people numbered 1, 2 and 3.

Two people sit face to face and the third person will observe them separately. One person will play the role of listener, one person will be the speaker and the third person will be observer. It can be played three times so everybody has a turn to be the speaker, listener and observer.

	Person I	Person II	Person III
Round I	Speaker	Listener	Observer
Round II	Listener	Observer	Speaker
Round III	Observer	Speaker	Listener

- In Round 1, the speaker can share a positive thing.
- In Round 2, the speaker can talk about one thing which makes him or her angry.
- For Round 3, the speaker can talk about one thing that makes him or her sad or embarrassed.
- After each round the observer can briefly describe to the other participants what he/she observed.

## Activity 1.4 Mind Mapping: Active Listening and Community

Now divide the participants into groups of four and tell them they will be creating a mind map of active listening in their community. A mind map is a diagram that represents ideas and concepts graphically. It is a useful tool to help organize information in a more visual manner. [See an example](#) of a mind map for detailed guidance.

Each participant writes the words 'Active Listening in our Community' in the middle of a piece of paper. After this they draw several lines outwards, on these they draw pictures and write key words that represent the different components to active listening. Attached to these lines are several smaller lines. On each smaller line, they draw and write key words related to the effect of active listening in their group and community.

# Mind Map

A mind map is a diagram used to visually represent concepts and ideas. Mind mapping is a way of linking key concepts using images, lines and links. In a mind map a central concept is linked via lines to other concepts which in turn are linked with other associated ideas. In a mind map, you begin with one central idea and then other thoughts radiate from that idea.

## Steps to mind mapping:

- 01 Draw the central idea in the center of the page
- 02 Attached to the central idea are several lines with images or words that represent different important aspects of the central idea (this is the first branch of thinking). These lines help to order your thinking about the central idea.
- 03 Attached to these main lines are smaller lines that represent aspects of the first branch of thinking (this is the second branch of thinking).
- 04 If you have further thoughts you can draw lines attached to the second branch of thinking and so on.
- 05 Some mind maps can have several branches.

The following is an example of a simple mind map:

