

Active Listening Experiential Exercise

Purpose:

This activity provides an opportunity to experience the value and potency of conscious listening within specific parameters and guidelines. In a facilitator-inspired learner relationship, it can help create a safe, supportive and encouraging atmosphere.

It gives the speaker permission to speak without fears of interruption while speaking and criticism after speaking. It also gives the speaker the experience of having their partner's undivided attention and focus.

This experience gives the listener the opportunity to step into the place of being fully present to the speaker and to focus on the positive aspects of what the speaker is sharing. The listener also gets to practice acknowledgment by sharing with the speaker only the positive ideas, thoughts and beliefs the speaker shared.

Competencies:

- ❖ Creates and maintains a safe, encouraging environment
- ❖ Understands the “Guidelines for Accelerated Learning”
- ❖ Creates trust
- ❖ Practices positive focus
- ❖ Understands and practices acknowledgement
- ❖ Models active listening

Guidelines:

The facilitator (trainer, tutor) explains that this exercise is for the purpose of experiencing a safe, fun, supportive and encouraging environment. This is the environment that is the foundation for tutoring in this model. It allows all parties involved to experience a facilitating atmosphere of support, fun, peer-to-peer sharing, encouragement and great safety.

Steps:

1. Ask the group as a whole a thought provoking, uplifting question.
(Ex: What is something you want to learn more about? Why? What learning experience do you have really good memories about? Explain. What's a personal memory that makes you smile broadly? Share it, and why it makes you feel so good. What does your ideal life look like?)
2. Gives the group 1 - 2 minutes to bring something relevant to mind.
3. When everyone has something to share, divide group into pairs.
4. Ask for a volunteer to be the first speaker in the pair.
5. Explain the 'job' of the speaker and the listener as follows:

The speaker is to speak for 2 minutes on the subject they have chosen. They are to focus on the positive aspects of the subject; share the good feelings they have about it and anything about the subject that makes them feel good.

The listener is to give the speaker their undivided attention. The speaker is to remain quietly attentive, showing interest and encouragement without speaking. The listener is listening for the positive and uplifting things the speaker says. The job of the listener is to mentally capture the things, thoughts or ideas they can acknowledge the speaker for.

6. The acknowledgment: The lead facilitator (trainer, tutor) calls time at the end of 2 minutes. (A 30 seconds heads up might be helpful).

At this point the speaker is asked to go into 'receptive mode' mode so that the listener can share with the speaker what they heard that was positive and inspiring. The listener is now the acknowledger. The speaker is not to speak except to say thank you when the acknowledgment timeframe is complete.

For 1 – 1 ½ minutes the listener showers the speaker with positive feedback on what they heard.

7. At the completion of round one, the original speaker says, "Thank you!"
8. Have speaker and listener change roles.
9. Repeat the directions.
10. Repeat the experience with the new speaker and listener arrangement.
11. Discuss the experience. Let your timeline and group size determine if everyone shares or if selected pairs share.