

Adolescents learn about and practice active listening.



## Activity Overview

### Purpose

Exploring complex topics related to active listening through role-playing.

### Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Practice empathy through active listening

### Competency domains

Communication and expression; Empathy and respect.

### Works well for

Adolescents who are ready to explore the meaning of active listening in depth, and who feel comfortable performing role plays in front of each other.

### Phase

Connecting.

### Before

Recommended Peace and conflict. Use Role Play tool.

### After

Use active listening techniques through other activities, such as Practicing interview skills.

### Preparation

Prepare a demonstration role play in advance, using the scenario outlined below (see Step by Step), with the help of an adolescent volunteer. Use it to demonstrate helpful (active) and unhelpful listening techniques. Use role play tool.



# Active listening

1

Ask adolescents to sit comfortably on the floor and place the marker board where they can see it.

2

### ||| Facilitator says:

"What is the difference between hearing and listening?" Allow adolescents to discuss.

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### Explain

- ▶ Hearing is something we do without thinking or trying. When we only hear something, we may or may not pay attention and remember it.
- ▶ Listening means paying attention and making an effort to remember and understand something.

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### ||| Facilitator says:

- ▶ "Now [name of adolescent] and I are going to do a role play. Watch us and see how well you think I am listening."

Role play scenario: You (the facilitator) play the part of an older sibling. You are trying to study. The adolescent plays the part of a younger sibling. He or she is very excited to tell you about a move they saw during a football match on the playground that day. Act uninterested, as if you are trying to ignore your younger sibling and focus on your homework.

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Complete the role play.

### ||| Facilitator says:

- ▶ "Was I listening to my younger sibling? How can you tell? What did I do to show that I was not listening?"

Ask adolescents to list examples that show someone is not listening. These may include: Not looking at the person nodding,

using other body language to show you are paying attention; and not using words that show you are interested and understand what the other person is saying.

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Do the role play a second time, using the same scenario. This time behave as if you are interested in your younger sibling's story and listen carefully.

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When the second round of the role play is completed,

### ||| Facilitator says:

- ▶ "Was I listening to my younger sibling this time? How can you tell? What did I do to show that I was listening?"

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Ask adolescents to list examples that show that someone is listening and write them on the marker board. Try to include the following:

- ▶ **Show interest** through eyes and body language (Example: Nod and look at the speaker);
- ▶ **Ask questions** to show the speaker that you want to understand what they are talking about (Example: Have you ever seen him play football before?);
- ▶ **Summarize** what speaker says to show you understand (Example: It is amazing to score a goal from that far away!);
- ▶ **Don't interrupt** to start talking about something else; and
- ▶ **Reflect feelings** (Example: I can see why you were excited to see that team play so well!).

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Divide the adolescents into groups of two and label one person A and one B.



# Active listening

## Explain:

They will interview each other and practice active listening techniques: The topic of the interview is: Who is a person you know and admire, and why do you admire them?

Give the adolescents two minutes to complete the first round of interviews, with As interviewing Bs. Then, without debriefing, ask them to stop and switch roles. Bs now interview As.

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## Sharing and Take Away

Bring the adolescents back into a circle. Ask them to go around the circle and summarize what they learned from each other in their interviews.

## Discuss:

- ▶ Which active listening techniques did

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## Explain:

- ▶ How does it feel when you are talking and someone uses active listening? Does it change the way you talk or tell your stories, or what you say?
- ▶ Do active listening techniques change anything for you as a listener?
- ▶ When someone listens actively we feel encouraged to say more, we can concentrate on what we are saying and we can express ourselves more clearly.
- ▶ When we use active listening techniques it is easier to feel interested in and remember what the other person says.

## Do & Don't

- ✓ Demonstrate both positive and negative examples of active listening.
- ✓ Discuss appropriate active listening behaviours in the local cultures and customs.
- ✗ Give adolescents an interview topic that requires them to talk about difficult experiences or memories.

## Adaptation

**Cultural context:** Use appropriate examples and descriptions of active listening for the local context. For example, in some local contexts making eye contact can be seen as disrespectful, and in others it is a sign of respect. In some cultures, making statements while the speaker is still talking can be a way to show encouragement and interest, while in others it may be seen as an impolite interruption.

## Environment

Indoor or outdoor space. Quiet.

## Improvise

- ▶ Let adolescents perform their own role-plays about active and non-active listening. Always end with a positive example of active listening.
- ▶ If adolescents are preparing to interview adolescents or adults outside their circle, help them to prepare by practicing their active listening skills.

## Continue

- ▶ Encourage adolescents to practice using active listening in their day-to-day conversations and to see if it changes or improves their interactions.
- ▶ Support adolescents in setting goals for using active listening in their own lives. If adolescents in the circle feel comfortable sharing personal stories with each other, take time during sessions to share their progress with each other.
- ▶ Explore how active listening can help adolescents to resolve or transform conflicts, and understand other people's perspectives and experiences, and to strengthen their empathy and tolerance.

