

Active Listening exercise (group exercise)

Goal: To practice active listening and reflection

Skills we are building:

- Empathy
- Observation
- Listening for needs/feelings



Active Listening exercise (group exercise)

1. Someone volunteer to be the first **sharer** (A), and they take a conflict card or come up with a situation to share
2. Someone else volunteers to be the first **listener** (B)
3. The rest of group **observes** the interaction, witnessing the exchange
4. The **sharer** (A) asks the **listener** (B) for emotional consent, is it ok to talk right now? (this is also an opportunity to practice rejection)
5. The **sharer** (A) then reads their conflict card or talks about their situation, to the **listener** (B), this should be about 30 seconds
6. Then the **listener** (B) reflects back what they heard, using the **sharer's** (A) words as much as possible, this should be about 30 seconds also
7. After reflecting, **listener** (B) asks a question to explore the underlying feelings and needs behind the **sharer's** (A) perspective (e.g., "It sounds like fairness is important to you. Can you tell me more about what fairness means to you in this situation?").
8. **Listener** (B) checks for accuracy: "Did I get that right?"

Active Listening exercise (group exercise)



1. After each round, have a short debrief (about 2 minutes) amongst the group, to talk about:
 - a. Did the **sharer** feel heard?
 - b. Did the **listener** accurately reflect what the **sharer** shared?
 - c. What observations did the **observers** have about the exchange?
2. And afterwards, go to the next person speaking a conflict and repeat until everyone has been able to do all three roles

Debrief

Let's answer these questions:

- a. How are you feeling now?
- b. How did it feel to have your perspective and underlying feelings and needs reflected back to you?
- c. What challenges did you encounter when trying to understand the deeper values of another person?
- d. Did the gentle probing questions help you clarify or expand on your own perspective?
- e. How can we apply this skill of understanding underlying feelings and needs to real-life conflicts and disagreements?

