

Active Listening Skill Drill

Type of event: Experiential communication workshop

Target group: Trainers, educators, youth workers, facilitators, and dialogue practitioners

Short description:

The Active Listening Skill Drill workshop provides participants with hands-on experience in developing listening, empathy, and understanding skills. Participants explore the difference between passive, reactive, and active listening and practice specific techniques such as paraphrasing, non-verbal communication, and checking understanding. Through reflection and exchange, they recognise listening as a core foundation of dialogue and intercultural understanding.

Framework (structure)

Before the session (online):

Pre-workshop communication: Participants receive a short note explaining the importance of active listening and are invited to reflect on their current listening habits using the question: "When was the last time you truly felt heard?"

Optional resource: short video or article on empathy in communication.

During the session (online or in-person)

Introduction to Active Listening (11:05–11:15, 10 min)

- Trainer introduces active listening as a key skill for dialogue, empathy, and conflict resolution.
- Input includes "what active listening is not" (interrupting, planning your response) and "what it is" (presence, paraphrasing, empathy).
- Online adaptation: Use slides or Whiteboard of Canva with "dos & don'ts," optionally show a 2-minute video comparing poor vs. good listening.



Mini-Demonstration (11:15–11:25, 10 min)

- Trainer role-plays two short conversations with a volunteer — one showing poor listening, one demonstrating active listening.
- Participants observe and comment: “What differences did you notice?”
- Online adaptation: Focus on tone, body language, and paraphrasing in video setting.
- Instructions for Pair Exercise (11:25–11:30, 5 min)
- Trainer explains the pair exercise:
- Partner A speaks for 3 min, Partner B listens silently using only non-verbal cues.
- Partner B then paraphrases for 2 min.
- Switch roles.
- Suggested topics: “Describe a challenge at work” or “Share a meaningful experience.”

Pair Practice – Round 1 (11:30–11:50, 20 min)

- Participants move into breakout rooms in pairs to practice.
- Trainer visits rooms to observe and provide short feedback.
- Emphasis on presence, eye contact, and listening without interrupting.

Plenary Debrief – First Impressions (11:50–12:00, 10 min)

- Group reflection: “How did it feel to be listened to? How did it feel to only listen?”
- Trainer captures keywords on Canva Whiteboard (e.g., relieving, challenging, understood).

Pair Practice – Round 2 (12:00–12:15, 15 min)

- Same exercise as before, but now Partner B adds short reflective questions (e.g., “Did I understand you correctly?”).
- Roles switch again.
- Online adaptation: Trainer posts sample reflective questions in chat.

Plenary Debrief – Second Round (12:15–12:25, 10 min)

- Discussion: “What changed compared to the first round?”
- Trainer highlights the importance of checking understanding and avoiding assumptions.





Link to Dialogue & Intercultural Contexts (12:25–12:35, 10 min)

- Trainer connects active listening to real-life dialogue settings — intercultural, interfaith, or conflict mediation.
- Prompt: “Where could you use active listening more consciously in your work?”
- Online adaptation: Participants post reflections on Canva Whiteboard

Wrap-Up & Takeaways (12:35–12:45, 10 min)

- Participants share one key insight or commitment in chat or via Mentimeter: “Tomorrow I will practice active listening by...”
- Trainer summarises key points: active listening = presence, empathy, paraphrasing, checking understanding.

After the session (online)

Follow-up email includes:

- Summary of key insights and Jamboard notes
- Recommended reading list (CoE resources, NVC communication guides)
- Reflection question: “Which listening habit will I focus on improving this month?”

