

# “Listening in Communication”

---

**OBJECTIVE:** To help children understand the value of listening and to acquaint them with different listening types.

**SKILL:** Effective Listening



- Video
- Exercise Sheets
- Counsellor Interaction

---

## CORE LEARNING

Listening is an essential skill in effective communication

### What is listening?

Listening well is critical to our ability to become an effective communicator. Listening is one of the most used communication skills and one of the most neglected communication skills. How many of you have ever had a course in how to listen? Listening is not as easy as it sounds. There are typically two roles played in communication, a listener and a speaker. If you weren't born a great listener, the good news is that it can be learned!



### Listening Vs Hearing!

A lot of people think these two words mean the same thing but the truth is they are very different. Hearing is a very passive experience where your ear intentionally or unintentionally is stimulated by an outside noise. For instance, you could be sleeping in your room very early in the morning and birds start to sing outside your window. You hear the singing but that's as far as it goes. Listening on the other hand is an active experience

where you intentionally focus in on what someone is saying. It means being able to interpret what the speaker is saying. It also means being aware when you are not understanding the message and adjusting your listening strategies so you can comprehend the message. Successful communication starts off with a willingness to listen. No matter what the issue may be about, without the willingness to listen, communication is lost. Listening is the foundation of GOOD COMMUNICATION and everything else is built on this.



## 2 types of Communication

When people are communicating with you, there are two types of communication you must pay attention to. One is called **Verbal Communication** and the other is called **Non Verbal communication**.

*Verbal Communication is all the information the person is openly expressing with their mouth. E.g., greeting, remarks, venting, small talk, introductions etc. Only about 15 % of communication is verbal.*

Most of communication is non-verbal which accounts for about 85 % of communication. This is meaning drawn from someone's body language, tone, posture, eye contact, body distance, speed of language, use of distractions etc. Non-verbal communication is way more powerful because most people don't realize they are reacting in that way- although it gives so much information to the listener. A good listener should be always paying attention to all the non-verbal information being expressed in communication.



## Different Types of Listening

---

**Silent Listening-** is when you listen attentively without disturbing the listener. This type of listening requires serious mental and physical concentration. It is most suitable when the communicator is excited, worried and wants to talk. It is not effective when the communicator is shy, not expressive, or reluctant to speak.

Characteristics of silent listening includes leaning forward, nodding, eye contact (but not staring) and facial expressions

---

**Supportive Listening-** is when you help or encourage the speaker to express his/her thoughts. It is most suitable when the communicator is shy, reserved or anxious. It is useful when being silent or passive is not enough. It is very useful to identify the needs of the person, resolve a difficult situation and get to heart of the matter.

Characteristics of supportive listening include nods, smiles and short replies like “aha, go on, yes, well, so, really, and.. other types of supportive statements

---

**Echo Listening** is a technique where you repeat the speaker’s last word or phrase. It’s very useful when the speaker can’t find the right words or runs out of words. You should be cautious not to overdo this otherwise you may become offensive and make you think you are impatient. Repeating the last word or phrase is called echoing because it gives the communicator support and encouragement to continue their message. Using echoing is neither positive nor negative. It’s not a sign of agreement or disagreement, just encouragement.

Examples: Sally- My mom and I are thinking of going to...

Mavis-‘Going to ..?’

Don- “ I think the Blue jays are going to be playing the.....

Ryan: The ..?’

---

---

**Active Listening** - is used to help people feel comfortable enough to share what they need to express. The aim of active listening is to create mutual understanding and trust, to encourage the other person to speak, to find out information and to smooth emotions. There are two types of active listening; 1) Asking questions 2) Rephrasing (paraphrasing and summarizing)

---

When we paraphrase we use statements like:

- “What I hear you saying is .....
- “Correct me if I am wrong”
- “As I understand it you are saying
- “If I understood you correctly, what you are saying is
- “So, you mean.....

---

When we actively listen, we demonstrate willingness

- To listen
  - To be interested in what the other person is saying
  - To focus on the person and his/her life
  - To respect the other person
- 



### Roadblocks to Listening

Like everything else in life, there are definite “don’ts when it comes to listening. There are some experiences we can have in communication that make people feel worse after speaking or regret having shared with you in the first place. The speaker doesn’t experience you as actively listening or focused and engaged in the communication. Instead they might experience feeling the following, none of which are helpful to the speaker.

### Judgement

1. Criticising- “Why did you do that, it was so stupid

- 2. Belittled- "All girls are the same"
- 3. Interpreting- "I can understand why you are doing this"
- 4. Praising- "You are so right"

**Bullied**

- 1. Ordered Around "Why can't you just do it this way?"
- 2. Threatening- "Calm down and I will listen to you"
- 3. Advice giving- "I think it should be done this way"

**Ignored**

- 1. Changing the subject- "Are you better, Lets' talk about something else'
- 2. Focusing on Logic- "I read this book that said you could have done it this way"
- 3. Soothing- "Don't worry, everything will be fine"

Place a checkmark after each sentence in the appropriate column

	Evaluation Free	Judgemental
I Think that you are stupid		
It sounds like you are saying you no longer want to work with our group		
You've messed it up again		
Why did you do that? That was so immature!		
I notice that you looked sad when you said that.		

## INSIDE STORY

During soccer practice, Lee sprained his ankle and felt disappointed when the doctor told him that he would not be allowed to play for 6 weeks. He limped on to the couch where his older sister was watching the world soccer championship on TV. He started to vent out his frustration of not being able to play soccer for the rest of the summer, and almost came to the point of tears because he felt so sad and stressed. Naomi, his sister uncomfortable with his emotions told him to suck it up! ““Everyone has issues, you are not the only one to sprain your ankle” She yelled. Lee felt so shut down; he immediately stopped talking and kept his feelings to himself.

- 1) Should Lee have chosen that time and that person (his sister) to speak to about his feelings? Explain your answer.
- 2) Why do you think she (Naomi) felt uncomfortable seeing and hearing Lee vent? Why do some people feel uncomfortable when others are feeling emotions?
- 3) What type of listening type would have been ideal for this scenario?

Additional Resources  
Everydayspeech.com  
Youtube.com