

Operations Training

Listening Skills

Purpose: Improve Listening skills with clients and teammates.

Preparation: No preparation required.

Facilitator: Begin the session by stating the name and purpose of the session. Then, break them up into small groups of 3-4 people.

Assign each group to have one person be the person who will do the talking. Have another person assigned as the listener. The other two will be observers. They can rotate roles at each exercise.

You will give the groups each of the following topics, one at a time and tell the “listener” to attempt to perfect the behavior listed.

The person talking can speak on anything they choose. But, if they can’t think of something, here are some topics:

1. Favorite vacation
2. Latest change with a client.
3. Latest irritation they had with a client.
4. Best thing about growing up where they did.
5. A detail about a policy change or coverage.
6. The best training session they ever attended.
7. A hobby they enjoy.

Now, begin each session by asking the listener to exemplify each behavior in the following order (So, first session will be #1, go for 1 minute. Second session is #2, go for 1 minute, etc):

1. Give the worst body language possible.
2. Eye contact (gentle and warm, not psycho killer) and SMILE!
3. Repeat key components or things said when appropriate. Example: "You went there! WOW"
4. Check for clarity by asking them to repeat a key component or repeat one segment. Example: You said, ... I am not sure I completely understood that. Could you tell me that again or explain it in more detail?"
5. Take notes but make sure to look at the person off and on to show you are engaged with them.
6. Summarize what was said.
7. Open body language. Don't cross legs or cross arms. Don't sit sideways. Lean into them a bit.

Ask the group to respond to the following questions:

1. How did the speaker feel with the different behaviors?
2. What behaviors were most effective for you?
3. What behaviors were ones you don't use very often but could make you a better listener?

Facilitator: Read the following

"Good listeners tend to get positive responses from others! That is the best measurement of great listening. We have the ability to make someone feel good about themselves by listening well. Listening is more than using your ears and brain. Great listening skills also let the person know you are listening. When we give the other person confidence we are listening, they will be better communicators. Try being a strong listener to your kids and see how much more animated and engaged they will be. This is also true with coworkers and clients.

Use the techniques we role played in this session. These are some of the basic listening skills that work. Work to implement them in your every day communications with clients, prospects, internal employees, and family members.

Great listeners are people who others enjoy being around. It is one of the most attractive characteristics someone can have as a personality trait!