



## Activity: Deconstructing Listening

Taking the time to reflect on your listening can help you build rapport and respect, promote understanding, invite various viewpoints into a discussion and avoid misunderstanding. It can also help you understand your strengths and where you could design specific practices to improve your communication. Key listening skills to consider include body language, reflection, clarification, asking questions and not interrupting or jumping to conclusions.

**Purpose:** This activity encourages listening as a communication skill and reflection about ways to focus on hearing, understanding and improving active listening.

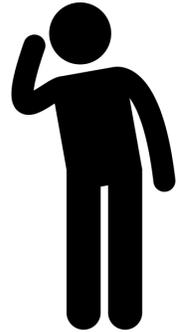
**Time:** 20-25 minutes (10 minutes for personal reflection, 10-15 minutes for discussion)

**Materials:** [Handout: Deconstructing Listening](#), writing utensil, paper/journal

**Who:** Mentor & Mentee

**What:**

1. Select 2-3 questions from the list below and take 10 minutes to reflect on the following questions. Capture your thoughts on paper so you can share them with your mentor/mentee later.
  - What are the reasons for why we listen?
  - Describe a time when you were not listened to.
  - What are the factors that become barriers to active listening?
  - Identify someone you think is a good listener. Why did you select that person?
  - What were the behaviors? How was listening demonstrated? How did it make you feel?
  - What is the power of listening? And being listened to?
2. Come together with your mentoring partner to discuss your personal reflection.
3. Share highlights from Step 1. What did you learn about yourself? And your mentoring partner?



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4. Brainstorm together examples of ways to demonstrate understanding and engagement. Provide an example or two of ways you could:
  - Paraphrase: “I think I just heard you say...”
  - Affirm: “That is a fantastic summary ....”
  - Ask open-ended/specific questions: “Would you share more...”
  - Connect by sharing similar situations: “It makes me think of ...”
  - Be Inclusive: “Are there other points to raise?”
  - Summarise: “Let me share what I heard...”
  
5. Select 1-2 new approaches you could practice with over the next two weeks. When you next meet, share what happened when you used those new approaches and your reflections about making these changes to your listening habits.

**Tips:**

- We encourage both the mentor and mentee to adopt a mindset of openness when observing and learning about your listening behaviors.
- Hold one another accountable when adopting these approaches. Actively use them in your spoken and written correspondence.

**Link(s) to Materials:** [Handout: Deconstructing Listening](https://tinyurl.com/HandoutDeconstructingListening)  
(<https://tinyurl.com/HandoutDeconstructingListening>)