

RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS

Effective communication skills
 Restorative Conversations
 Relational approach – growing
 staff relationships and capability

TIME REQUIRED

10 minutes minimum

FORMAT

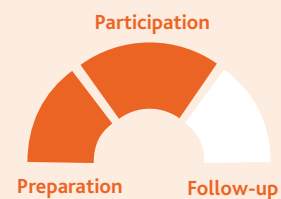
Pairs

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL

Levels 2 and 3

OBJECTIVES

- To explore and discuss the techniques of effective listening.
- To give feedback on one another's practice.

PROCESS PHASE COVERED**COMMENT: LISTENING WITH RESPECT**

Effective listening is one of the most important skills in a conversation. It allows us to follow another person's ideas, perceptions, and feelings. It lets the speaker explore, define, and discover what a particular behaviour or lack of action may be about – without interruption.

Listening shows respect. Listening in silence, coupled with summarising at carefully considered points in the conversation, is a very effective way to resolve issues and build relationships. Silence allows time for the speaker to think and reflect on their behaviour, and may also allow for the uncovering of deeper issues that have been masked by the behaviour.

Reflection, which comes after a period of talking, is the point in the conversation where the speaker begins to view their behaviour in a different way and consider how that behaviour has affected others. Good listening includes summarising what you have heard from the other person. It also lets the other person know that you are interested in them and in what they have to say.

There are three main forms of reflection:

- **paraphrasing**, which moves well beyond the speaker's words and presents information in a new light.
- **double-sided reflection**, which reflects both parts of any ambivalence (on the one hand ... and on the other ...)
- **affective reflection**, which addresses the emotions involved, whether expressed or implied.

An example of reflective listening

Vanessa (aged 14) usually seemed to be full of confidence, to the point of being aggressive. She didn't join in any school activities but seemed to always be with friends. Now she appeared sad, sitting in class drawing sketches on pieces of paper and saying "I don't know" if asked a question. Her teacher asked the counsellor to talk to her. The counsellor, through effective listening strategies, allowed Vanessa a safe platform to talk about the sudden death of her best friend and how lonely she felt. The counsellor listened for Vanessa's strengths and interests and noted that she liked sports, particularly netball – but Vanessa said they probably wouldn't want her.

The school had been building its strengths in restorative practice. At the next staff meeting the counsellor mentioned Vanessa's recent loss and expressed her concerns regarding Vanessa's withdrawal. Some staff discussed ways to encourage Vanessa to reconnect with the school. After learning she was interested in playing netball, the PE teacher suggested she meet with the counsellor and Vanessa to talk about some options. After their meeting, the sports coach was thrilled to see Vanessa arrive at training the next week and said, "Great that you've come to try out, I'll walk over with you." When Vanessa returned to the counsellor two weeks later, she chatted about making some new friends who played on her netball team. As she left the office she turned and said, "I didn't think anyone cared!"

ACTIVITY

Pair up with a colleague and take turns as the listener. Through paraphrasing, encouraging the speaker to use double-sided reflection, and affective reflection, find out as much as you can about a significant holiday the speaker has been on.

Discuss the exercise. How effective were the techniques, and how well were they used?

