

Video Worksheet 5: Deep Listening

[Watch video here](#)

Listening is key for communicating and developing relationships with other people. Yet, in everyday life, good listening can be quite rare. For one thing, we have many distractions and time pressures that make it difficult to listen. We may be so immersed in our smart phones or electronic devices, for example, that we miss what other people say, or not even hear when someone speaks to us. Or, if we feel rushed, we may hear the words someone says and give a superficial response yet fail to understand their feelings or the meanings behind their words. Fortunately, we all have the capacity to learn how to listen in a deeper, more engaged manner, although this requires both effort and practice.

To enable deep listening about the local context it is also important to take a slower approach to learning than is typically used and to adopt the attitude that 'we don't know what we don't know'. After all, local people may have views and understandings that do not fit outsiders' understandings. Even their view of who 'children' are may differ considerably from that of outsiders.

Learn more

The facilitator's role: listening and learning. Initial community engagement should be oriented toward non-judgmental learning about the community, its children, and the things that harm children or support children. Since the emphasis is on community perspectives the facilitator should assume that they do not know very much. They should ask open-ended questions that enable broad learning and avoid making assumptions about how the community members view their children and the various risk and protective factors. The facilitator is a bit like a student of a new subject where it pays to ask many questions and learn as much as possible. Read the listening and learning section of this [web page](#).

Qualities of deep listening

Active: Not casual or passive but energetic listening that probes for full understanding.

Attentive: Pays full attention to what the other person is saying and communicates this nonverbally (e.g., through friendly eye contact, where that is regarded as respectful, recognising that avoiding direct eye contact is respectful in some contexts) as well as verbally by saying things such as 'mm-hm', or 'okay', to signal one is following what is being said.

Open: Eager to hear the other person's ideas.

Respectful: Avoids judging, arguing, or cutting the other person off.

Empathic: Tries to put oneself in the position of the speaker, 'walking a mile in the other person's shoes.'

Caring: Shows concern and care for the speaker's feelings and wellbeing.

Adjusting to the speaker: Adapts to the individual speaker without forcing them to talk or to change their tempo, content, manner of expression, etc. This also involves being comfortable with silences.

Thankful: Communicates appreciation and gratitude for the other person sharing their thoughts and feelings and taking time to talk.

An open approach to learning. A process of deep listening and learning requires empathy, curiosity, humility, and a willingness to background our own preconceptions, thoughts, and analyses regarding the situation. [Read more about this approach to learning.](#)

Deep listening tools. Download and read this section on deep listening [here](#).



Discussion and self-reflection

1. What do you see the facilitator doing here? Can you think a good question(s) the facilitator could ask?
2. After you've discussed, read page 27 of the Deep Listening download [here](#).