

Conflict Management Group

Group 8 The Art of Listening

Most of us do a pretty good job of TALKING – expressing ourselves.

Most of us are pretty WEAK at the art of really LISTENING.

What gets in our way of really listening?

- Our need to control things
- Our anger and/or frustrations
- Our need to have the last word
- Being “upset”
- Being more concerned about our own needs/wants than concern for the other.

Tips to being a better “listener”:

- Listen to the reasons the other person gives for being upset (whatever the situation).
 - Try: “I want to understand what has upset you.”
 - Try: “I want to know what you are really hoping for.”
- Make sure you understand what the other person is telling you – from his/her point of view.
- Repeat the other person’s words and ask if you have understood correctly.
 - Try: “I hear you saying.....is that right?”
 - Try: “So you (think, feel, want).....is that right?”

Clarify the real issues, rather than making assumptions.

Ask questions that allow you to gain this information, and let the other person know you are trying to understand.

- Try: “Can you say more about that?”
- Try: “Is that the way it usually happens?”

Restate what you hear so you are both able to see what has been said so far.

- Try: “It sounds like you weren’t expecting that to happen.”

Reflect feelings – be as clear as possible.

- Try: “I can imagine how upsetting that must have been.”

Validate the concerns of the other person – even if a solution is not possible at this time.

Expressing appreciation can be a very powerful message if it is honest and respectful.

- Try: “I really appreciate that we are talking about this issue.”
- Try: “I’m glad we are trying to figure this out.”

- **Ask if there is anything else the person has on their mind.**

- Give the person time to “think”.

- **Resist the temptation to interject your own point of view** until the other person has said everything he/she wants to say and feels that you have listened to and understood his/her message.

- **12 Attitudes that Inhibit Harmony in Relationships**

- **Circle type of Response**

Conflict Phobia (also called anger phobia)	“People with good relationships don’t fight. Conflict is dangerous and should be avoided”	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Disclosure Phobia	“It is unwise to let others know how I feel.”	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Emotophobia	“I shouldn’t feel angry,” (or upset, etc.)	Passive Passive Aggressive

		Aggressive Assertive
Emotional Perfectionism	"I should always feel happy and loving." "I should always be in control of my emotions."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Fear of Disapproval	"I must always try to please everyone and meet their expectations."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Fear of Rejection or being alone	If I tell you how I feel, our relationship will fall apart and I'll end up alone."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Fear of Retaliation	"If I tell you how I feel, you will punish me. You're fragile and can't tolerate criticism."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Hopelessness	"You'll never change; there's no point in trying. I've tried everything and nothing works."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Pride	"I'm above feeling angry," or "It's too painful to admit that I'm a part of the problem."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Helping	"I must help you if you are feeling upset."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Passive Aggressive	"I will punish you with silence. I will get back at you indirectly and insist I am innocent."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive Assertive
Mind-Reading	"You should know what I want and how I feel without my having to talk about it."	Passive Passive Aggressive Aggressive - Assertive

Now, let's practice some of this and see if it works.

Scenario:

Your partner comes home 3 hours later than they said they would. Another "friend" texted you and informed you that he/she was talking to their "ex" and looked pretty chummy.

- What are you thinking?
- What are you feeling?
- How do you handle this?

Ticket:

Welcomed clients to Healing Harmony- Conflict Management group and opened session with the Serenity Prayer. Reviewed previous general group material (responding vs. reacting, passive, passive aggressive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors, etc.) Today's session focused on the art of listening. Talked about the differences in how men and women's thought patterns are different. Discussed the importance of "willingness" to listen and the strategy of picking the right time to talk and listen – when other distractions are controlled. Good group discussion and sharing.

Plan:

- Continue looking at the elements necessary for good listening.
- Continue looking the important value of "managing" the intensity of our feelings.

active with group discussion and sharing. Seemed to enjoy the group session.

Ticket:

Welcomed Healing Harmony - Conflict Management group this morning and opened session with the Serenity Prayer. Introduced topic for discussion/processing on the "art" of listening. Talked about how good most of us are with "talking" but less accomplished with really listening to another. Discussed what gets in our ways of really listening and then some "tips" to being a better listener. Some of these tips are:

1. Clarify the real issues in the conflict.
2. Restate what you are hearing that the other person is saying.
3. Reflect your feelings.
4. Validate the concerns of the other person.
5. Resist the temptation to have the last word.

Group then practices some of these tips via acting out a typical scenario. Good group participation and enjoyment of the role playing,

Plan:

- Continue encouraging assertive conflict management in all settings.
- Begin study/processing of healthy responses to conflict.

Individual Note:

Client active with group role playing. Seemed to enjoy the format – had fun.

