

# EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS



**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

**1/2-DAY COURSE**

**HRDQ**

**EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**

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PREVIEW

## Instructional Design and Learning Philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

### Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives provide effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training
- Meaningful connections between the topic and students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas helps students to focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques demonstrate useful behaviors and problem-solving skills
- Active application, the cornerstone to learning, helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistent instructions and design help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

### Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course to appeal to all learning styles and ensure that the ideas and information will be retained.

## Instructional Design and Learning Philosophy (cont.)

### Customizing Your Program

There are two ways you can customize this program: 1) Customize the content and 2) Customize the format.

Customizing the content is easy. The Instructor Guide and Participant Guide are created in Word, so you can simply modify the content just as you would any Word document. Some common reasons for customizing content include:

- Changing examples to fit your industry or work environment
- Modifying content to match work rules and procedures
- Adding, deleting or rearranging content to meet training time constraints

The other way to customize the program is to change the formatting. Typically, organizations will do this to add their corporate logo and/or colors, or it may just be an issue of personal preference. Again, treat the Instructor Guide and/or Participant Guide as you would any Word document. The styles used in this document are labeled HRDQ in the Quick Styles tab. For additional help using Word, consult the Microsoft website.

### Preparing for the Training

As you know, preparation is the key to conducting an effective training. Here are some issues to consider:

#### ***Logistics***

- Advertise the training with enough advance notice that participants can block it out on their calendars. Consider contacting potential participants' managers to encourage their attendance.
- Send a confirmation notice before the training reminding participants of the date, time and location.
- Room setup: Ideally, use round tables to facilitate partner and small group interaction.

#### ***Equipment and Supplies***

In order for the training to go smoothly, have these supplies and equipment on hand:

- Name tags
- Flip chart and markers, tape
- Laptop with projector (for the PowerPoint)
- Blank paper and pens, sticky notes
- Flip chart paper
- Water for yourself and the participants
- Beverages and snacks (optional)
- Timer or watch







Written Exercise

## Course Activities

### Module One: The Importance of Listening



Facilitation










Type of Activity	Segment	
	Course Objectives	
	Why Listen?	
	Listening Self-Assessment	
	Effective and Ineffective Listeners	
	Barriers to Listening	

### Module Two: Steps to Effective Listening

	Ready
	Receive
	Review
	Respond
	Remember

## Course Activities (cont.)

### Module Three: Skills to Improve Understanding

Type of Activity	Segment	
	Questioning Techniques	
	Uncover Hidden Messages	 Reading
	Encouraging the Other Person to Talk	 Written Exercise
	Listening in Emotional Situations	 Facilitation
	Listening in a Group or Audience	 Group Activity

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## Module One



## The Importance of Listening

## Course Objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- ◇ Describe the importance of listening
- ◇ Identify barriers to listening well
- ◇ Implement the steps of active listening
- ◇ Uncover hidden messages
- ◇ Listen in emotional situations
- ◇ Increase information flow to enhance productivity and teamwork

PREVIEW

### Trainer Notes

5 minutes

*Introduce yourself and provide a brief background if participants don't know you. Go over logistics (schedule, breaks, restrooms, etc.) and any ground rules for the day. Typical ground rules include no electronics in use, show respect for every participant, participate fully, no dominating or interrupting, etc.*

*Review the course objectives with participants.*

Effective Listening Skills

#### Course Objectives

- Describe the importance of listening
- Identify barriers to listening well
- Implement the steps of active listening
- Uncover hidden messages
- Listen in emotional situations
- Increase information flow to enhance productivity and teamwork

## Why Listen?

Think of a time someone really listened to you. Briefly describe the circumstances, and describe how you felt.

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Now, think of a time you were really listening to someone else. Briefly describe the circumstances, and describe how you felt.

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## Benefits of listening effectively

- ◇ Building relationships
- ◇ Increasing productivity
- ◇ Solving problems
- ◇ Avoiding unnecessary conflict

*“Listening is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well.”*

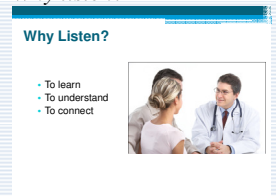
*John Marshall,  
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the  
United States, 1801-1835*

### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

*Activity: Ask participants to think of a time they felt someone was listening to them. Ask them to write about the circumstances and how they felt. Next, ask participants to describe a time they felt they were really listening. Debrief by asking for volunteers to share their answers. You will likely hear answers to how they felt such as “It made me feel understood,” “It avoided a conflict,” “I was able to help someone,” etc.*

### Why listen?



*Benefits of listening: Increasing productivity, improving ability to influence, persuade or negotiate, avoiding or minimizing misunderstandings and conflict, building relationships, solving problems*



## Listening Self-Assessment

*Instructions: Read each statement and circle the number that best reflects the frequency with which you demonstrate each listening skill.*

*1=Seldom 2=Sometimes 3=Frequently*

1. I listen for feelings and attitudes, as well as for facts.	1	2	3
2. I listen for unspoken messages by reading body language and/or tone of voice.	1	2	3
3. I avoid being distracted, mentally and physically.	1	2	3
4. I avoid making snap judgments and jumping to conclusions.	1	2	3
5. I avoid thinking of my response while the other person is speaking.	1	2	3
6. I focus on the content more than the delivery style.	1	2	3
7. I paraphrase to confirm understanding.	1	2	3
8. I avoid getting sucked into the other person's emotions.	1	2	3
9. I show the speaker I'm listening with appropriate words and responses.	1	2	3
10. I listen more than I talk.	1	2	3

### Trainer Notes

5 minutes

*Activity: Self-assessment. Tell participants to read each statement and circle the number that best reflects the frequency with which they demonstrate each listening skill. Allow several minutes. Debrief by encouraging participants to work on improving the areas where they rated themselves a 1 or a 2.*

## Effective and Ineffective Listeners

Ineffective Listener	Effective Listener
Tends to tune out slow speakers and/or dry topics	Thinks and mentally summarizes, listens between the lines to tone of voice
Easily distracted	Fights distractions, sees past bad communication habits, knows how to concentrate
Interrupts	Allows speaker to complete his or her thoughts
Takes so many notes, doesn't observe body language to take in complete message	Takes enough notes to recall message later
Is overstimulated, tends to seek and enter into arguments	Suspends judgment until comprehension is complete
Allows grammar mistakes or other errors to distract attention	Doesn't get hung up on grammar mistakes or other errors
Shows no evidence of listening	Holds eye contact and helps speaker along by exhibiting engaged body language
Judges delivery and tunes out based on delivery	Judges content, skips over delivery errors
Listens for facts alone	Listens for the entire message

### Trainer Notes

5 minutes

*An effective listener fights distractions, sees past bad communication habits and knows how to concentrate. A poor listener is easily distracted and tends to let his or her mind wander with slow speakers.*

*An effective listener refrains from making snap judgments or getting caught up in "hot button" words. A poor listener lets "hot button" words color his or her judgment and wants to argue back without listening.*

*An effective listener doesn't interrupt and encourages the speaker to finish his or her thoughts. A poor listener interrupts regularly.*

*An effective listener holds eye contact and helps the speaker along by showing an active body state. A poor listener shows no energy.*

*An effective listener listens for content, skips over delivery errors and listens for facts and central ideas. A poor listener judges delivery and tunes out someone based on his or her delivery style.*

#### Ineffective Listeners



- Tunes out slow speakers
- Is easily distracted
- Interrupts
- Seeks arguments
- Focuses on delivery errors

#### Effective Listeners

- Fights distractions
- Allows speaker to complete his/her thoughts
- Suspends judgment
- Focuses on content, not delivery



## Barriers to Listening

### Bad habits

- ◇ Convincing yourself that the topic is boring before you even begin listening
- ◇ Focusing on the appearance and/or delivery of the speaker
- ◇ Listening only to the facts/words and not the overall message
- ◇ Allowing emotionally charged words to impact your ability to listen
- ◇ Focusing on what you want to say more than what is being said

### Style differences

- ◇ What's your style?

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- ◇ What's your manager's style?

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### Activity

*Instructions: With a partner, discuss your most recent challenge or frustration at work.*

*"The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer."*

*Henry David Thoreau,  
American author and poet*



#### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

*Review the bad habits that may affect any person.*

*Style differences may affect how people listen (or not) to each other.*

*For example, some people are "just the facts" types and will drift if the conversation isn't strictly focused, while others are more concerned with feelings and need to know how the other person is feeling before he or she can "hear" the message.*

*Some people are natural interrupters because they are engaged in the conversation, while others listen patiently to the entire message from the other person before responding.*

*Some people make and need lots of eye contact while others don't.*

*All these differences, and more, can cause friction between the speaker and listener.*

*Activity: List your typical listening style. Do you make lots or little eye contact? Interrupt or wait? Want facts or feelings? Next, list your manager's style. If there is a difference, you may need to work extra hard to listen effectively to each other.*

*Activity: Have participants work in pairs. Decide who will go first and have the speakers talk about their most recent challenge or frustration at work while the listener uses all the bad habits possible. Switch roles, then debrief by asking participants how they felt when the listener used bad habits.*

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