

LEADERSHIP

Organization and country: INPRO, Czech Republic

Name of the activity: Can you hear me?

Overview (What I am going to learn?): You are going to learn to actively listen to others and you will see how easy it is to misunderstand someone even if you think you are listening well. You will learn to concentrate on others speech and to summarize their talking in an understandable way. Also this tool will learn you to be patient and empathetic.

Objective (What am I going to learn it for?): It is very easy to misunderstand someone, and with this tool you will see how easy it actually is. After finishing this activity, you comprehend that it is important to actively listen and at the same time how to make yourself clear. Also, when one is listening properly and there are no misunderstandings, it is enhancing personal relations at work, thus making the work environment more friendly.

Materials: You need to prepare topics about which can participants talk. It is up to you if you choose some easy topics, such as pop culture, fashion or sports, or if you want to get deeper with topics such as a theory of the origin of the universe. However, participants can speak about their own topics.

Time: During this activity you do not need to measure time precisely, however it is recommended that none of the speaking participants speak for more than 3-5 minutes, and none of the listening participants speak for more than 1-2 minutes.

Target group: Anyone can attend this activity

Instructions for facilitators

This activity is good for practising active listening as well as for finding out whether one is good at it or not. Not only is this activity encouraging listening skills, but also encourages empathy,

communication and selflessness. All these qualities should be possessed by a good leader. Also the aim is to understand how important is to listen to others and how simple it is to misunderstand someone.

First ask the participants how they would evaluate themselves regarding active listening. Maybe they will have a strong feeling that they are good listeners.

After this activity is done, you will ask them again how they would evaluate themselves now and if they would change their self-evaluation.

Prepare few conversational topics ahead, it would be good if some of the topics are easy (music, sports etc.) and others can be more difficult, e.g. the origin of life on Earth. However, participants can speak about any topic they like. It is important that the speaker talk about the topic that will work for him/her.

Divide the whole group of participants into pairs. One from the pair will be “the speaker”, and the other “the listener”. The speaker will now speak about the topic s/he choose, and the listener will try to listen as carefully as possible.

After the speaker is done the task of the listener is to recapitulate what was said by the speaker as precisely as possible. If the listener was paying attention, s/he should be able to re-tell everything what was said. However, in case the listener was not intent and attentive, the version of the story he is re-telling will be different from the one told by the speaker.

Tasks and procedure:

Divide the group of participants into pairs. One from the pair will be the listener, other one will be the speaker. You can assign topics to speak about or the speaker can choose his/her own topic.

The task of the listener will be to pay attention to everything what was said, because after the speaker is done, the listener will be asked to recapitulate the speech precisely.

Once the listener is finished, they can change roles within this pair, or the pairs can be changed completely. The next process will be the same as in the previous rounds.

Conclusion and evaluation:

It is crucial to have a discussion after finishing this activity. Ask participants how they would self-evaluate themselves after finishing this activity, if it is changed in comparison to the initial thoughts or not. And if they are satisfied with their results. The discussion afterwards can consist of questions such as “was it better for me to be the listener or the speaker?”, “what did I learn about myself?” or “do you think that better listening and understanding can make the work environment better?”.

After several rounds, you can ask participants to make a list of what makes good active listening and use these tips at your workplace.