

JUST LISTEN

This activity encourages participants to communicate how they think and feel about a subject. It is intended to strengthen team members' listening skills.



25–30 minutes



Minimum of 2



8 index cards per pair; each card lists 1 discussion topic

Source: Adapted from MindTools

DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- How did speakers feel about their partners' ability to listen with an open mind?
- Did their partners' body language communicate how they felt about what was being said?
- How did listeners feel about not being able to speak their own views on the topic? How well were they able to keep an open mind? How well did they listen?
- How well did the listening partners summarize the speakers' opinions? Did they get better as the exercise progressed?
- How can we use the lessons from this activity in our day-to-day work?

WHAT TO DO



Listening is an incredibly important part of communication; however, it is a skill that needs to be developed and used in team activities. This exercise can show team members how to listen with an open mind.

1. In advance of the session, prepare enough index cards for each team of two to have its own set of eight cards. Each card will have a different discussion topic listed on it (e.g., the role of culture in health care, trust in our work, patient safety, etc.).
2. Ask participants to find a partner.
3. Provide each pair with their own set of eight index cards.
4. One partner chooses a card at random and then speaks for three minutes on how they think and feel about that topic. Their partner cannot speak during this time – their primary goal is to listen.
5. After three minutes, the listener has one minute to recap what their partner said. They cannot debate, agree, or disagree – only summarize.
6. Next, the roles switch and teams begin the process again.