

The Listening Deck

10 Activities to get the best from your card deck

Independent and Group Activities to develop your listening skills in a fun and meaningful way.



Independent Activities:

1. Pick a listening skills card for each day of the week and be intentional in practising that skill each day. At the end of the week, take some time to reflect on what you noticed in yourself and for others.
2. Choose a listening context and pick a listening bias that you most identify with. Select the listening principle and listening skills which you think will help you to overcome the bias. Practise the skills and principles selected during the week ahead. At the end of the week, take some time to reflect on what you noticed in yourself and for others.

Group Activities:

3. Select one listening skill you are particularly good at (hold in your right hand) and one that you are less good at (hold in your left hand). Hold them where others in the group can easily see. Connect with another in the group who is good at the skill you are less good at and encourage them to share their top tips in how they became so good at this one! Equally be prepared to share your top tips for the skill you are particularly good at. Each group member will require their own set of cards.
4. Ask for 5 volunteers to act out the biases in turn without revealing which one they are acting. The remaining group members then identify the bias and select a principle that will help to overcome this bias. Discuss the different ways the listening principles can help to overcome the listening biases.
5. Ask for 2 volunteers – a listener and a speaker. The listener chooses and demonstrates a listening level* and the opposite of some of the listening skills, without revealing the listening level. Distribute a set of cards amongst the group and ask them to identify what listening level was being demonstrated and what skills they could have used instead for higher quality listening.

6. In pairs, each person has their own set of cards face down well shuffled. Take turns in turning over the cards and call SNAP when you reveal the same card at the same time. Pause and take a moment to discuss the card, what is written and share a story or example that relates to the card. Continue until you have SNAPPED at least 3 times.
7. In pairs or small groups of 3, choose a listening context and randomly pick a listening skill, a listening bias and a listening principle. Discuss the impact of the combination of cards you have randomly chosen.
 - How would you demonstrate the skill revealed?
 - How would you overcome the bias?
 - How would you adopt the listening principle?
8. Each member of the group picks a listening card at random. Taking equal turns, each member share how would you demonstrate what is on the card and what are some of the barriers that would stop you doing or being this?
9. In a small group of 3 or 4, pick one of the listening cards that reveals something you would like to become better at (other than pretend listening!). Share a little context with the group members and invite them, in turn, to share their thoughts and experiences in how they would develop this area of listening to deepen their skills and mindset for deeper listening. At the end of the round, share your freshest thinking and any new ideas which you would like to adopt as you deepen your listening and thank them for their ideas and experiences shared.
10. In pairs, choose a listening level*. Share with other group members when you find yourself in this level of listening?
 - When does listening at this level serve you and serve others?
 - When might it limit you and others?
 - When might you choose to shift to a different level?
 - What skills will help you to shift to a different level?

*Note: We will naturally be in the various levels of listening throughout our day. They are not necessarily incremental, although listening generatively is – I would offer – the ultimate level of listening we can aspire to. The idea is develop our self-awareness and choose which is the most appropriate for the situation we are in.

Thank you for listening.