

Active Listening

HALF-DAY COURSE FOR LEADERS AND TEAMS

Active listening is the skill of ensuring we hear accurately and without blame what others are saying, and of helpfully drawing out what they want to say, but may find difficult to put into words. This is an important skill within any interaction, whether developing partnerships, dealing with clients, or working with one's own staff. The ability to listen actively is crucial in many settings, such as running time-efficient meetings, holding successful interviews, mentoring and coaching. It also enables us to recognise the potential in others, and how to unlock it.

This half-day course will increase your ability to:

- Draw out important or relevant information quickly;
- Maintain collaboration and partnership within an interaction or negotiation;
- Put individuals at ease;
- De-escalate conflicts and difficulties;
- Create rapport even in difficult or imbalanced situations;
- Hear people's intentions 'behind the words';
- Pick up verbal and non-verbal cues – and know what to do with them;
- Deal with reactions or judgements which may emerge in the listening role;
- Engage with the speaker without interrupting their flow.

Course Aims:

- To understand the processes that lead to active listening;
- To develop transferrable skills for communicating across boundaries and within teams;
- To create greater clarity and efficiency for successful collaboration.

Learning Objectives:

- Developing empathy and rapport;
- Knowing where to focus one's listening attention, and feeling at ease doing so;
- Reflecting back to affirm the speaker and ensure they feel understood;
- Increasing the memory of the listener;
- Remaining alive to what is going on inside oneself as listener;
- Keeping a clear head, and one's objectives in mind.

For further details:

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What course delegates say...

'Very useful communication techniques for avoiding conflict.'

'There's always a different perspective, and we never really stop learning.'

'Better than any communication skills training I've had before.'

'[The course] gives us an insight into how to deal with difficult situations in a more strategic way.'

'[The course] provides an awareness of what we do with our communication skills during our working life, thereby improving our understanding of not only our own, but other individuals' needs.'

'The course really helped me make sense of my own communication ... a useful way of improving work life and relationships.'

'The course helps you get more organised and efficient in achieving an effective conversation.'

'A very useful tool for understanding the importance of connection and empathy.'

'Useful to have time to reflect on how you are communicating. There is no time for this in a normal working day and courses like this give us the opportunity, as well as teaching us new techniques.'

Approach and Methods

The atmosphere of the course is relaxed and enjoyable, and the learning both stimulating and thought-provoking. Activities include interactive exercises, discussions, personal reflection, and small-group role-plays. We avoid static presentations, preferring a more hands-on approach, which allows for increased interaction between trainer and delegates, and which encourages delegates to get to know each other in new ways. As well as working from a specially tailored course handbook, participants will use examples from their own experience as a means to gain first hand and embedded understanding of the processes of communication. The approach is strengths-based, drawing out and building upon delegates' current skills. This means that participants explore issues that are current for them in a supportive environment – a process that can be both challenging and illuminating.

Central Model

Active Listening is an adaptation of *Nonviolent Communication*[™], a process developed internationally in high conflict situations for mediation and reconciliation. This is now increasingly applied in businesses for developing communication skills. It is excellent for promoting effective and efficient communication, establishing blame-free working conditions, resolving difficulties and conflicts when they arise, and fostering an atmosphere of openness and trust between colleagues, partners and customers. This can radically increase the quality of working lives, and have a dramatic impact on teamwork, staff retention, and customer care.

