

## EXERCISE #3 – The road to conflict resolution through Listening Skills

### **SKILL BENEFITS:**

#### **For the speaker:**

- Nurturing experience of being heard, truly heard without being cut off, without having someone else tell you their similar story and without being told someone else's opinion, perspective or how to fix it. No shame, blame or judgement.
- Developing the experience of an empathic connection and acceptance.

#### **For the listener:**

- Observing their own understanding of what it takes to actually listen to someone.
- Observing how difficult it is to stay with someone else's story without wanting to tell your own or cut in with your own personal comments.
- Developing the skill to reflect back in a way the speaker feels heard.
- Developing empathic connection and acceptance.

#### **For the supportive helper:**

- Listening to two people interact and developing an ease with which to stop the process and support both participants with feedback to bring them back to task without judgement of right or wrong.
- Encouraging listening skills, impartially, mutually and acceptance.
- Conflict resolution skill development.
- Develop tracking skills.

### **Exercise Steps**

1. Have the group break up into groups of three. Speaker, Listener and Supportive Helper. The intention is that each person will have the opportunity to be all three.
2. Have the speaker think about something that happened that day and tell their story. Have them discuss how it happened and how it affected them. \*you may want to choose a topic ahead of time for them to consider; such as getting ready for school, a school project they are working on, etc.
3. Guidelines for the Speaker:
  - A time limit of 3 minutes to speak.
  - Only say approximately 40 words at a time and let the listener feedback what has been said.
  - Notice what happens inside as the listener begins to reflect back what is truly being shared.
4. **Guidelines for the Listener:**
  - Listen to the speaker in order to tell back what you have heard him/her say. Use as many words of theirs as you can remember and try not to put it into

your own words. Sometimes we like to tell someone what we think they are saying rather than what they are actually saying.

- If what they are sharing brings something up for you, or you don't understand or you begin thinking of something else therefore did not hear them, tell them that. Express that something came up for you and could they repeat what they have shared so you can get it right.

## 5. Guidelines for the Supportive Helper

- This is an important job. It creates safety for the speaker and for the listener to participate in a supportive and positive way.
- Listen to the speaker's words and notice if they say too many words. If someone hears too many words they will not remember and they will lose connection to what is being said. The number of 40 is the most someone can take in at one time. Put your hand up and say, "Could you stop and let \_\_\_\_\_ repeat back to you what you have just shared?"
- Listen to the reflection back by the listener and notice if the listener begins to:
  - tell their story and not what the speaker has said,
  - doesn't use the speaker's words and generalizes the story that was shared,
  - tries to make it okay, by telling the speaker that it's okay, or that this happens to everyone,
  - gives the speaker examples of other things that may be similar to what the speaker has shared.If this begins happening put your hand up and say, "I am wondering if you would be willing to try and tell \_\_\_\_\_ back in their own words what you heard them say. If the listener does not remember, ask the speaker to go over this part of their story again.
- Notice if the speaker begins to tell a different story that does not resemble the original one. If so, put your hand up and ask the speaker if they would be willing to go back to the original situation (storyline).

### **Ideas for coming back into the whole group sharing the richness of this experience after this exercise.**

Have one person from each group (or specify a set number of volunteers) share:

1. What it was like to speak and be heard this way? What came up for them?
2. What was it like to listen this way? How hard was it to stop thinking of their own things and truly listen to the words being spoken by someone else?
3. What was it like to listen to two people, the speaker and the listener, in order to support them? What it hard to keep track of the conversation of two people?