



CHEAT SHEET

LAUGH**O**LOGY

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

This cheat sheet will help you listen more effectively, by giving you top tips to really understand someone and be better able to support them.

It turns out that listening isn't as easy as you might think. Scientific research shows that we listen to people at a rate of 125 to 250 words per minute, but think at 1000 to 3000 words per minute – so there's always a lot going on in our heads, while we're supposed to be listening to others!



ACTIVE LISTENING

DO...

There are 3 types of listening:

- Internal
- Focused
- Observed

Each has its place, but focused and observed listening are what to aim for, to get the best out of chats.

Internal Listening

As the name suggests, internal listening is 'all about me'.

Our attention is on our inner dialogue; what it's telling us about the current situation in relation to our surroundings, our own thoughts, judgements and feelings. In a chat, it can be only a matter of seconds before we stop listening to the other person, as something often pops into our head. We are then just waiting for a pause in the conversation, so that we can have our turn and say what's on our mind.

During chats, try to minimise the amount of internal listening you do, although getting the other person to be aware of their internal dialogue will be helpful to them.

Focused Listening

This is a more active type of listening, where it's 'all about them' as we focus on the other person.

It requires concentration, non-judgement and an awareness of what is not being said, as well as what is.

By doing this, we not only listen to their words, but we also notice their expressions and emotions. We recognise the points in the conversation when the other person is engaged, or when they are withdrawing.

Observed Listening

This is the most active and skilful level of listening.

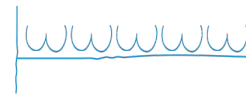
At this level, we:

- Take into consideration our own thoughts, and the environment, on how we hear the conversation;
- Match the other person's tone and body language naturally, to build better rapport and empathy with them;
- Listen using all our senses, keep an eye out for other subconscious elements, and read between the lines. Do check you are getting this right by saying things like, 'When you said that, your tone changed, why was that?'

Try these top tips:

Ask questions that begin with: who, what why, when, where, and how. This is more helpful than imposing your solutions and helps you understand more.

Recall these by thinking of '5 bums on a bench.' The bench is the H for how, and the 5 bums are the wwww. Remember, 'Tell me more,' can be less threatening than 'Why?'



Before you start chatting, draw 2 columns on a piece of paper – one with the heading 'In' and the other 'Out'.

As you chat, in the 'In' column - jot down any questions that are related to the conversation. This will help you to keep listening, not interrupt and remember them for a bit later on.

If anything completely unrelated pops into your head (such as 'I must remember to defrost the chicken') then pop it in the 'Out' column. If you don't, it will keep nagging away at you and make it tricky to concentrate.

It's okay to give advice but, rather than saying, 'Ask Tom, he's the expert,' try saying, 'You might want to ask people in school who have expertise. Can you think of anybody?'

For quieter members of the team, you might create a questions box – this can be anonymous, or there may be digital solutions.