

Looking after ourselves as listeners:

A model of sustainable listening that deepens connection whilst minimising burnout .

~ Does your work involve listening to people?

~Do you and your team know how to take care of yourselves whilst listening ?

~Are you or your colleagues risking burnout from listening to difficult content or listening to people in extreme stress?

~Would you like to know more about a model of listening that looks after the listeners as well as those they are supporting?

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This is a three page guide that supports sustainable listening, so that we can support people well for the long term without burning out.

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Suitable for third sector staff & volunteers/ community workers / social care teams / activists /social workers/teachers/ public services / medical professionals and anyone for whom listening is a key part of their role.



The ARC of sustainable listening



How do we look after ourselves as listeners?

Listening is one of the core skills of supporting each other. It can help build our communities, change our behaviours and resolve our conflicts. It can also contribute to our overwhelm and burnout. Given how important listening is, we need to find ways of doing it well, ways that are sustainable for the long haul.

The ARC model (active skills, receptive practice, capacity building) looks at listening through the lens of the nervous system. This helps us to listen to ourselves as well as to each other. It teaches us to respond to internal feedback so that we can build our capacity to stay responsive rather than reactive.

The ARC of sustainable listening

Active Skills

The doing of listening:

Reflection

Paraphrasing

Summarising

Non verbal feedback

E.g nodding, eye contact.

Empathy, congruence, respect

Receptive Practice

The being of listening:

Grounded in Presence

Resourced and Connected.

Listening to self as well as
other

Recognising & responding to
signs of dysregulation.

'Listening to hard content or difficult realities can be very impactful. If we want to listen well to others, we also need to listen deeply to ourselves.'

Capacity Building

Growing our Window of Tolerance (WOT) as listeners.

Our WOT means we are engaged and at ease, and can recover from the inevitable moments of being activated into a stress response .

To do this we need to understand neuroception ~ the automatic, unconscious scanning of our nervous systems for threat & safety.

We need to notice our habits of interrupting or shutting down and recognise them as feedback that we have left our WOT.

We can then apply a regulation tool to return.

Interested in learning more about this? [Go here](#)

Interested in training in sustainable listening? [Go here](#)

This resource was created by www.jennyrosesmith.co.uk

jennyrosesmith123@gmail.com