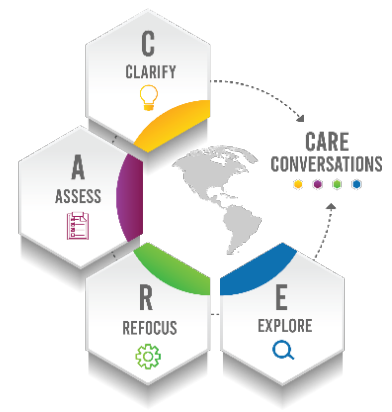


# Exercise 2:

## Listening Skills



*“Most people do not listen with intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”*

*Stephen R. Covey*

**Aim:** To provide a self-assessment of your listening skills. Listening skills are critical to the success of CARE Conversations. There is no pass or fail. But areas where you can improve. It may help to highlight some blind spots.

### Does this sound familiar?

- *“I don’t feel heard.”*
- *“He just wants to find a solution instead of working through the process. I want him to just listen to me.”*
- *“She is always on her phone when we are talking.”*
- *“His tone of voice is so dismissive.”*
- *“All she does is sit in silence.”*
- *“We both start yelling and then shut down – nothing is ever resolved.”*

These are typical statements that Lesley Lewis, a counsellor, and coach, who runs Culture3Counsel, has heard her clients say on numerous occasions in couple counselling. She continues, “The truth is the majority of people are often thinking of something else and only hear a percentage of what is truly being communicated.”

### Are you a good listener?

1. Set up a situation where you can listen to your partner describe his/her day at the office.
2. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 - 5 for each item,  
1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good and 5 = very good.

Self-assessment of your listening skills	1	2	3	4	5
Giving the other person time to talk.					
Facing the person talking.					
Listening attentively and thoughtfully.					
Keeping your eyes available for eye contact.					

Showing your interest.						
Encouraging the person to develop the theme.						
Speaking only in response.						
Showing that you understood by reflecting back what was said.						
Not telling your own story, interrupting the flow.						
Taking turns to speak.						

3. Now ask your partner to rate your listening skills.
4. Reverse roles and describe to your partner your day at the office or at home.
5. Your partner rates his/her listening skills.
6. You rate your partner's listening skills.
7. Discuss any differences. If you did not do particularly well, think of strategies to improve next time. Take care not to be too hard on yourself nor overly confident.

### How to improve as a listener

- Ask yourself: *How would I like to be listened to?*
- Ask clarifying questions to help you really understand what is being said.
- Reflect back what you think you heard the other speaker say.
- Give the speaker your full attention.
- Try not to let your mind wander or prepare your answer.
- Do not interrupt whilst the other person is speaking.
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues, they deliver 98% of the message!