

Needed...

A strong, deep person wise enough to allow me to grieve in the depth of who I am, and strong enough hear my pain without turning away. I need someone who believes that the sun will rise again, but who does not fear my darkness. Someone who can point out the rocks in my way without making me a child by carrying me. Someone who can stand in thunder and watch the lightning and believe in a rainbow.

From Concerns of Police Survivors newsletter

Listening With An Open Heart: Exploring Forgotten Communication Tools

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Our Goals

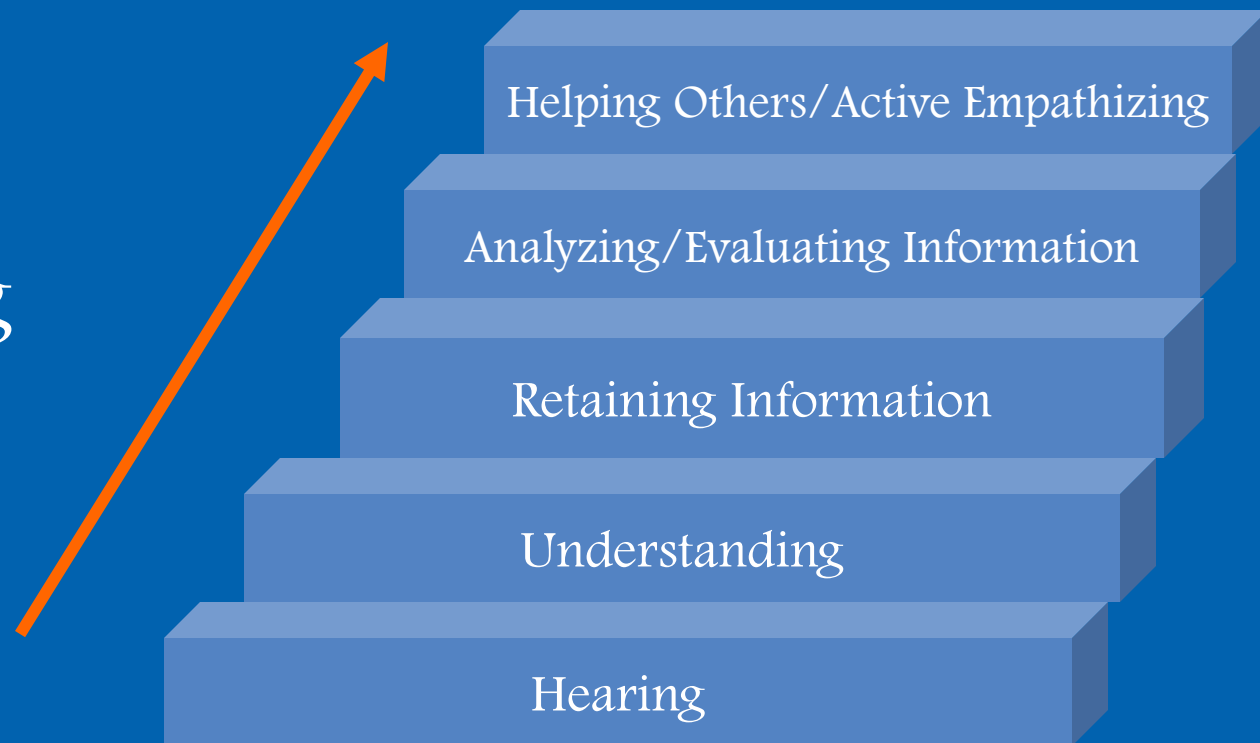
- ◆ Define listening and presence, including evidence-based benefits of each
- ◆ Outline barriers to listening and being present
- ◆ List techniques for minimizing barriers to listening and providing presence

Listening and Hearing

- ◆ Intentional stance versus physical act

Ray's 5
levels of
Listening

More Energy &
Involvement



I Don't Know What To Say...

by Dr. Robert Buckman

“Rules for Free Conversation”

- ◆ Get the setting right
- ◆ Find out whether the patient wants to talk
- ◆ Listen and show you are listening
- ◆ Encourage the patient to talk
- ◆ Don't forget silence and non-verbal communication
- ◆ Make sure you haven't misunderstood
- ◆ Don't change the subject
- ◆ Don't give advice early
- ◆ Encourage reminiscence
- ◆ Respond to humor

Hallmarks of Effective Listening

- ◆ For the listener
 - Curiosity
 - Open-ended questions
 - Reflecting/Providing feedback
- ◆ For the person talking
 - Greater engagement

Listening as a Gift



I'm With You Now
by M. Catherine Ray

Judgment-free feedback:

- Minimal encourager
- Probing
- Acknowledging
- Checking out
- Paraphrasing
- Repeating
- Summarizing

The Power of Presence by Doug Manning

“Ears and learning”



Silence



“Compassionate Silence” by Anthony Back et al

- ◆ *Awkward silence* – lacks clear intention
- ◆ *Invitational silence* – convey empathy by giving other person a moment to think
- ◆ *Compassionate silence* – quality of mind requiring set of mental capacities:
 - Stable attention
 - Emotional balance
 - Feeling of empathy and compassion

Presence

1. Implies self-giving to the other person at the moment at hand
2. Being available and at the disposal of the other person for a period of time
3. Listening with an awareness of the privilege of being allowed to be present
4. Listening in a way that involves giving of one's self
5. Being there in a way that other person defines as meaningful

Presence

- ◆ Not a technique, but a way of being
- ◆ “The students understood that spiritual care resides in intuitive, intangible, small, and often-unnoticed acts rather than in obvious, momentous, and/or recognized rituals.”

“Being~With Dying” by Virginia Seno

5 Patterns:

- *Face and accept death*
- *Personal experience of death allows us to connect with, engage and attune to patients & families*
- *Calm and clear mind, knowing and unknowing, recognizing others as they are (non-judgmental)*
- *Call forth what another knows*
- *Situated space, organization, and system circumstances on behalf of family*

What Gets in Our Way?

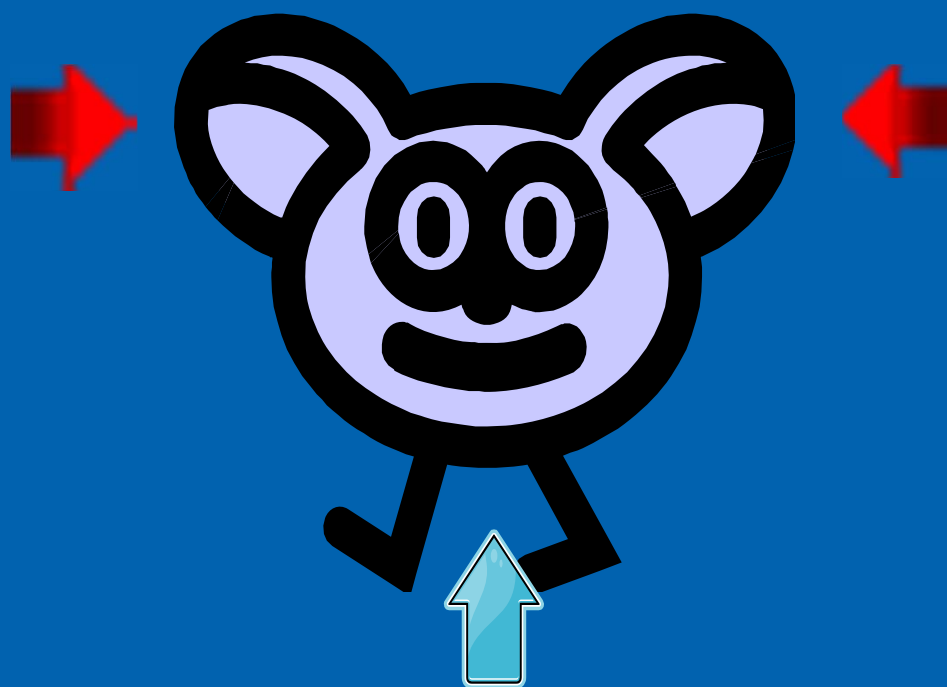
- ◆ Assumption that listening is like breathing
- ◆ Time restraints
- ◆ Lack of support from the healthcare system
- ◆ Lack of training/skill, particularly with presence

When the Person Can't Communicate

“Speaking” without words

- Reading nonverbal signals
- Expression of feelings
and needs through
behavior





Even If You Remember Nothing Else, Remember This...

- 1) Effective listening and presence begin with a focus on self
- 2) Listening is a much more effective intervention than talking
- 3) Achieving such states as “presence”, “being-with-dying” and “compassionate silence” takes a great deal of courage, mindfulness and intentional effort

*We can make our minds so like still waters that
beings gather about us that they may see, it
may be, their own images, and so live for a
moment with a clearer, perhaps even a fiercer
life because of our quiet.*

WB Yeats 1883

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The Listening Quiz

The most effective way to improve communications is to become a better listener. After all, 80% (give or take 5%) of effective communication involves listening.

To determine your listening quotient, take this test:

- Yes / No I anticipate what people will say next as they are speaking.
- Yes / No I'm constantly judging the merit of what people say from the very first sentence.
- Yes / No I discount what other people say if they don't agree with my opinions and values.
- Yes / No I rarely pay attention to people's nonverbal cues (such as body language, facial expressions).
- Yes / No I let my biases and opinions affect my ability or willingness to listen to what some people say.
- Yes / No I prepare what I'm going to say in response while the other person is talking.
- Yes / No I often interrupt people to speed along a conversation or to inject my opinion.
- Yes / No If I disagree with people, I interrupt them immediately to set the record straight.
- Yes / No Most of the time, I am ready with a response right when the other person stops talking.
- Yes / No If the other person is long winded or boring, I stop listening.
- Yes / No When I stop paying attention to someone, I try to look like I'm listening anyway.
- Yes / No When I know what people are going to say, I don't wait for them to finish but answer right away.

Now count how many times you answered "No:

- *If you have 10 or more, you're a skilled listener.*
- *If you have 7 to 9, you're well within the average range. People probably wouldn't call you a bad listener. They might just think you're inattentive, or too busy or distracted to pay attention.*
- *If you have less than 7, you need to work on your listening skills.*

Adapted from Witt Communications at http://www.wittcom.com/listening_quiz.htm