

Listening



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

—Stephen Covey

“Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand.” —Sue Thoele

LISTENING IS A KEY element in dialogue. Dialogue involves people not only speaking but also really listening. The intent is to leave the conversation with a better understanding of both the topic at hand and the alternative perspectives that might contribute to deeper understanding. When we embrace judgemental attitudes that stigmatize or engage in discriminatory behaviour, we are not really listening. We are not listening to the words. Listening involves:

openness

Real listening requires us to acknowledge that we do not know everything. Listening means we are open to receive new perspectives that may transform our current understanding. In the context of stigma and discrimination, listening means reflecting on our own assumptions and engaging with people unencumbered by stigmatizing attitudes and assumptions.

the alternatives.

We are curious about the experiences of others, ask genuine questions, and try to understand the meaning beneath what the speaker is saying.

We listen not only for what is being said but also for what is not being said. We listen to the underlying emotions and needs.

