



LESSON 1:

Listening When It's Difficult/Active Listening

Student Outcomes	CSED/ SEL Model Standards
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Cite examples or situations in which it's difficult to listen to others.➤ Identify how to respond when it may be difficult to listen.➤ Recognize strategies to stay engaged in conversation.➤ Compare and contrast difficult situations in which it would be beneficial to listen.➤ Cite the benefits of listening in difficult situations.	<p><u>SEL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Moral Character➤ Performance Character➤ Intellectual Character➤ Self Awareness➤ Self Management➤ Social Awareness➤ Relationship Skills➤ Responsible Decision Making

Educator Prep

- Write the following quote on the board: **“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.” —Winston Churchill**
- Pre-arrange students into groups of three. Have them read aloud the quote. When ready to do group activity please allow for change of scenery if possible. They may want to work in the corners of the room or go into the hallway quietly! Give them a chance if you think it may help facilitate this work!

Lesson

Mindful Minute. **“Find a comfortable position to sit or stand during our Mindful Minute. Close your eyes and focus your attention for one minute on what sounds you hear.”**

“What physical, mental, emotional, and social benefits have you noticed from practicing Mindful Minutes?” Examples might include: helping them to relax, being more present, or taking their minds off of things that trouble them. Remind students about the study showing that they gain more from benefits they’re aware of.

“Look at the quote written on the board. What does it mean to you?” (Group Work Discussion)

“Sometimes it takes courage to speak up, or to speak your truth. Other times it takes courage to listen and take someone else’s perspective. Today we’re going to discuss ways that you might respond if you find it difficult to listen to someone else.”

“In your groups of three, take turns answering this question: When is it the most difficult for you to listen to another person?”

Have each group share one example with the class. After students share their responses, paraphrase what they said and highlight any themes you noticed. If it doesn’t come up, ask students how feeling defensive impacts their ability to listen.

Responses might include things like:

- When the other person disagrees with you. (About content or subject)
- When you don’t like the other person. (Relationship problems)
- When someone is not respecting your boundaries.
- When someone is telling you what to do and not listening to your ideas, feelings, needs, or perspective. (Reciprocity)

“In your groups, take turns answering this question: How do you typically respond when you find it difficult to listen?”

Have students share their responses, paraphrase what they said, and highlight any themes you noticed.

“In what situations could it be beneficial to stay engaged in a conversation, even though it might be challenging or uncomfortable?” (A friend could be saying something I disagree with, but I could learn something new.)

“How could it benefit you to listen, even if it’s a difficult conversation?”

“Each group of three will make a list of five strategies that you can use to listen to another person’s perspective, even when it’s challenging. What can you do to stay engaged in the conversation?”

Students can write these down in Google Classroom thread. Have students/groups share their responses. Paraphrase what they said and highlight any themes you noticed.

Examples might include:

- Focusing their attentions
- Repeating or paraphrasing what the other person said
- Taking notes
- Taking deep breaths
- Using self-awareness to report their experiences

For example: **“Michelle, I’m trying to listen to you, but I’m having a difficult time because I strongly disagree with your assumptions. I want to keep listening, so can we slow this down to help me focus?”**

Note: These listening suggestions should not be applied to bullying or harassment situations, circumstances where physical, psychological, or emotional safety is in question, or if students are in immediate danger.

Ask for student volunteers to paraphrase what they learned today.

Social Media Extension

Google Classroom post, ask students how they respond online when they find it difficult to listen to others.

Invite students to find an article or post that contains a political, social, or moral perspective that differs from their own. What thoughts, emotions, physical feelings, intuitions, and “wants” arise?

Teacher Toolbox

When you notice students having trouble listening to you or each other, suggest various ways that they can engage differently. Examples: taking a break, letting their brains and bodies de-escalate, paraphrasing. Remind students that if their lizard and numbat brains are activated, it can be very difficult to listen and learn. Encourage them to calm their nervous systems down before continuing.