WEEK 1: Effective Listening

Objectives:

* Explain effective listening and questioning techniques to foster effective communication
* Apply effective listening techniques to people that have different opinions than their own

Session plan:

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| **Time** | **Activity** |
| 00- :10 | OPENING   * Welcome group & thank them for joining the call * Introduce Liz, Alexis * Introduce OFA * Introduce ‘organizing for 18’   + <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1grBm6ni_sDCr3kXpVNZd5QpOYTGjTFtZpC1CI_vmwoM/edit> * Plug #OFAction on twitter to share insights * To get people comfortable in the chat box, facilitator says, “We have people calling in from all over the country that are wanting to make a difference in their communities! Type your city and state in the chat box, and give others some appreciation for being on the call!”   **Opening question:** *Think of a time you changed your mind about something that deeply mattered to you. Chat it into the chat box.*   * People type their answers into the chat box * Facilitator reads out answers and notes common trends that they are seeing across answers * Facilitator reads out the objectives of the call * Facilitator states, “Effective conversations MUST start with listening. To make real change in our country, we need to be equipped with listening skills to make others seen, known, loved, and pushed. Otherwise, when we talk, no one will listen.” * “Research has shown that by listening effectively, you get information from the people you are talking to, you increase others’ trust in you, you reduce conflict, you better understand what motivates others, and you inspire high levels of commitment” |
| :10- :25 | INTRODUCING CONTENT   * *Key concept number 1:*   + **We don’t listen as effectively as we think we do**: a study of 8,000 people employed in businesses, hospitals, universities, the military and government agencies found that virtually all of the respondents believed that they communicate as effectively or more effectively than their co-workers; however, research shows that on average, people only listen with 25% “efficiency” (they cannot repeat back what they heard or why it matters to the person they are talking to) (!!!)   + Activity: (How many F’s do you read in this statement? ‘Finished Files’ example → connection that we are literate but miss minuta, miss vital details though we technically ‘listen’ to people all the time) * *Key concept number 2:*   + **Many things get in the way of deeply listening to someone.**   + Picture analysis: (show picture having a conversation on a crowded subway in New York); Type into the chat box what would get in the way from these two people from listening to each other   + Facilitator: things to highlight (*barriers to effective listening: trying to listen to more than one conversation at a time, you find the communicator unattractive/attractive, you are not interested in what they are talking about, you are not focused, you are listening for your stop, you are prejudiced or biased, you have already formed a reply in your mind*)   + This concept is vitally important- self awareness is vital to effective listening. We must pay attention to who you interrupt, who you think is worth listening to and who is not, and ask yourself why.   + Connection to ‘danger of a single story’: ESPECIALLY when we talk to people with political opinions that are different than our own, we have biases against them, and they likely hold biases against us. Preconceived notions about others are natural, but when we do not take time to analyze them, they can influence our thinking in ways that we do not intend. Chimamanda Adichie warns us against having a single story in our minds about other people- it limits our thinking, promotes miscommunication, and further perpetuation of siloed groups that coexist but do not understand one another in a nuanced way. * *Key concept number 3:*   + **Effective listening is a SKILL.** You have to practice it, and it is of vital importance- otherwise, we are in conversation with people and ideas or information is not being exchanged   + We can practice self awareness, we can practice ways to listen more effectively- and ultimately, to build trusting relationships with others, building community and hopefully change * *Key concept number 4:*   + So what is effective listening? **Actively absorbing information given to you by a speaker, being able to identify their primary message, intent for sharing, and beliefs about why they are sharing** |
| :25- :45 | APPLICATION   * Facilitator: We have the opportunity to practice effective listening through some techniques and practice right now! Most people believe they are good at this, but as we saw above, people listen with 25% efficiency rates, and if everyone was as good at communication as they believed they were, our world would likely look a little bit different than it does   + **Technique #1**: Reflecting: A summary statement of what you just heard from the speaker, often leading with the phrase, “What I am hearing you say is XYZ, is that correct?”     - Trim clips from this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN6O5LTaGyg>     - Have applicants type in example reflection statements, facilitator reads a few out loud     - Facilitator shares own reflection statement   + **Technique #2:** Probing: Asking additional questions to get to the root of something a person said, typically a value or belief     - Application: video 2     - Have applicants underline key words in the conversation that they would want to probe and unpack why that person said XYZ   + **Technique #3:** Ask questions: Questions show the person we are talking to that we are interested in what they are saying. Like probing, they get to the root of what someone is sharing.     - Application: video 3     - What questions would you ask at this point in the conversation? * Cautionary traps:   + **Deflecting:** shifting topics when we are uncomfortable with the current topic   + **Advising**: telling the person we are listening to what we think they should be doing |
| :45- 55 | SYNTHESIS   * Which technique comes easily to you? Which technique do you respond most well to when people do for you? Which trap do you fall into? * As we head into Thanksgiving, is there a listening technique you want to try out and grow in? Do you have a single story about someone you are close to, and want to commit to understand that person more deeply through listening? (Facilitator tells story) |
| :55- 1:00 | CLOSING, SURVEY, TEASER FOR NEXT TIME   * Chat box: What is one thing you are taking away from this training? * Teaser for next training:   + Know your why * Survey * Express gratitude and appreciation |