

Philippi Namibia

Christian Counselling & Training Organisation

Listening & Responding Skills Course

Philippi Namibia

P.O. Box 4447

Windhoek

Tel: 061-259055

Fax: 061-259210

Email: philippi@mweb.com.na

Head Office

Philippi House

34 Sherbourne Road

Blackpool

Lancashire

FY1 2PW

Tel: 01253 621859

Fax: 01253 751156

Email: admin@philippi.co.uk

Listening and Responding Skills Course

'My dear brothers take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry'. James 1:19

Course Introduction

ACC Recognition

As yet there are no formal criteria for 'Carer' accreditation, but these 15 hours of training should be acknowledged by the Accreditation Committee.

Course Aim

To teach students basic listening and responding skills

The course is for people with little or no previous experience or training in this area and who feel they want to develop their listening and responding skills.

It is NOT intended to qualify you as a counsellor

It IS a basic listening Course

It WILL allow you to TEST out whether to consider further training in Christian Counselling.

Training Methods will include

Trainer input

Small group, pairs and triads work - this allows us to gather information while we interact and communicate with each other

Discussion

Personal notes – jot down those things that are new to you.

How to Maximise Learning (Getting the most from the course)

Be Committed

Participate and share with one another
Don't hold back - ask questions
Practise 'active listening' all day
Listen with your eyes as well as your ears
Pray for understanding. (Silent 'arrow' prayers)

The role of the Trainer

Help create a safe learning environment
Help bring the experiences and reflections of all participants together and into focus
Offer some additional insights and experiences
Help create an opportunity for practice in a safe training environment
Help to bring focus to all the above
Encourage action planning and future development

The role of the Learner

Participate fully in the course and interact with one another
Take own notes and add to personal file to create a resource for the future
Complete homework assignment
Develop knowledge by reading course notes and required book
Maintain confidentiality (see below)
Play a part in creating a safe learning environment
Pray and ask God for His guidance and wisdom

Confidentiality

During this course you will be involved in interactive work in groups and in pairs. A good deal of what you learn will come from your own experiences and those of others. Therefore, it is essential that there is a safe relationship of trust between all members of the course, and a commitment by every course member to hold and treat in confidence any information that is disclosed by other members of the course. Please make your commitment to confidentiality now by reading and signing the statement below.

Code of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the preservation of private information that is disclosed by one person to another in a counselling, training or supervision session.

Confidentiality is based on important principles: the basic right of the person and an ethical obligation on the part of the trainee or trainer. These are essential to the development of trust.

Confidentiality Contract

I
(PRINT FULL NAME)

Signature:

Date:

Declare that I will abide by the conditions agreed in the group contract during and following this training course.

Facilitator's signature:

Date:

Facilitator's name printed:
.....

Declare that I will abide by the conditions agreed in the group contract during and following this training course.

The Listener's Attitude

¹ *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,*

² *then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.*

³ *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*

⁴ *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

⁵ *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus*

Philippians 2:1-5

INTERVIEW 'A'

- Club Member: Can I talk to you about the changes you are making to the Youth Group. I'm seriously thinking of leaving and going to the Charismatic Church.
- Youth Leader: Well, the changes have all been agreed by the Leaders and as a Church we must be forward looking.
- Club Member: But I can't change just like that - I've been a member of the Youth Group for 4 years. I think a lot of the fun has gone out of it.
- Youth Leader (Threatened): What do you mean the fun has gone out of the Club?
That's not true at all. I have been trained as a Youth Leader and I've done exactly what I have been trained to do.
- Club Member: I don't mean to hurt your feelings, but all those bonding games, outdoor adventures, and the long discussion groups. It changes every week. I never seem to know what's happening next. If I feel so out of line with everybody else, maybe I ought to go somewhere else, where I can fit in.
- Youth Leader: But you've always been here - so you can't leave just like that. I appreciate all that you've done for us—you've always helped us set up and you are a hard worker when we redecorate or change the shape of things. You never let us down.
- Club Member: It doesn't make any difference, after all we are all part of the same wider Church. I'd sooner give my time to a Club that is able to stick with some of the basic fun things.
- Youth Leader: The Charismatic Church might change too and where would you be then? Anyway the Charismatic Church is not your type of Church at all; it's all happy clappy - no order at all.
- Club Member: It is how we used to be here before all the changes. I blame the last Leader actually. He's the one who started it, and then he left for a bigger Church well, I mean, there's no commitment and you've not been here long.

Youth Leader: I don't think we should criticise Dave Titus. He's not here to answer for himself. I can't change things back again. Everyone else is happy with the new set-up.

Club Member: That's what I mean I think it would be best if I just go.....

Personal Comments

INTERVIEW 'B'

- Club Member: Can I talk to you about the changes you are making to the Youth Group. I'm seriously thinking of leaving and going to the Charismatic Church.
- Youth leader: The Charismatic Church?
- Club Member: Yes they do things differently there. They haven't changed the way they do things.
- Youth Leader: And you feel the Youth Club at the charismatic church would suit you?
- Club Member: Yes..... Well it's not an easy decision. I've been coming here for four years and I won't find it easy to leave. The charismatic church is a bit noisy for me but they don't have all those bonding games, outdoor adventures, and the long discussion groups.
- Youth Leader: You must find the changes very difficult, especially if you are thinking of leaving after having spent four years with us and are considering going to another club that won't exactly suit you. You are obviously having to make a very serious decision.
- Club Member: It is difficult but I feel I'm the one who is out of place. Everyone else seems happy with the changes.
- Youth Leader: I'm not sure that's true. There are others who feel the way you do – you must know them – I guess you have a word about it sometimes among yourselves.
- Club Member: One or two. I don't particularly want to lose contact with them. We've all grown up together.
- Youth Leader: And they don't want to leave.....?
- Club Member: No.... But they don't want to rock the boat over a principle.
- Youth Leader (encouraging): Principle? Do you mean yours or the clubs?
- Club Member: The clubs of course.
- Youth Leader: You feel the club has lost some of its principles?

Club Member: Yes. It's probably good to do some of these new trendy things, but it's been too much too fast. I blame the last leader he introduced these new changes without any discussion. He just did his own thing.

Youth Leader: There were a number of changes that a number of people found difficult then, weren't there? But I've introduced changes too..... perhaps you are feeling that the club has lost it's way and that the Youth Leaders are to blame?

Club Member: I suppose so. (pause) I don't know.

Youth Leader: Well I wonder what we can do to improve things for those who feel like you. Would that be something we could consider rather than lose you? It sounds as if you have ideas too and that we should talk about them.....

Personal Comments

Empathy

“Empathy is the ability of one person to step into the inner world of another person and to step out of it again.”

Empathy is to feel ‘WITH’

Sympathy is to feel ‘LIKE’

Pity is to feel ‘FOR’

Barriers To Listening

| Barrier | Try To |
|---|---|
| You think you know what they are going to say and make assumptions about what it is. | Positively keep an open mind. Tell yourself that the person has something new and interesting to finish saying |
| You feel they are missing the point and unless you make a suggestion them in the right direction they | Focus on what is being said. Identify, and remember 'key' words, in case you need to help the client re-focus on the issue that concerns them. |
| Your mind is elsewhere, you are thinking of something else, e.g. the previous meeting, a family concern, a Church matter. | Consciously clear your mind of other thoughts. |
| You are anxious/nervous. | Relax, you don't have to come up with any answers! Focus closely on what the client is saying; being centred on their problem rather than yours will help. You might consider at the outset of the session praying for God's peace. |
| You are angry. | See the positive intent of what is being said or happening. This means searching for any positive reasons that the person might have for behaving in the way that is angering you, e.g. they are trying to improve your performance, rather than telling you off. |
| You are hot, cold, tired, thirsty, hungry, etc. | Make sure you and the group are as comfortable as possible. Take care about the physical environment - it does matter that the room is at an appropriate temperature, there is good ventilation. Monitor the energy levels of the group - do they need a break? |
| There are noises and interruptions. | Again, try to choose a venue that is quiet; put up signs about no interruptions, consider banning all telephones, particularly mobiles! |

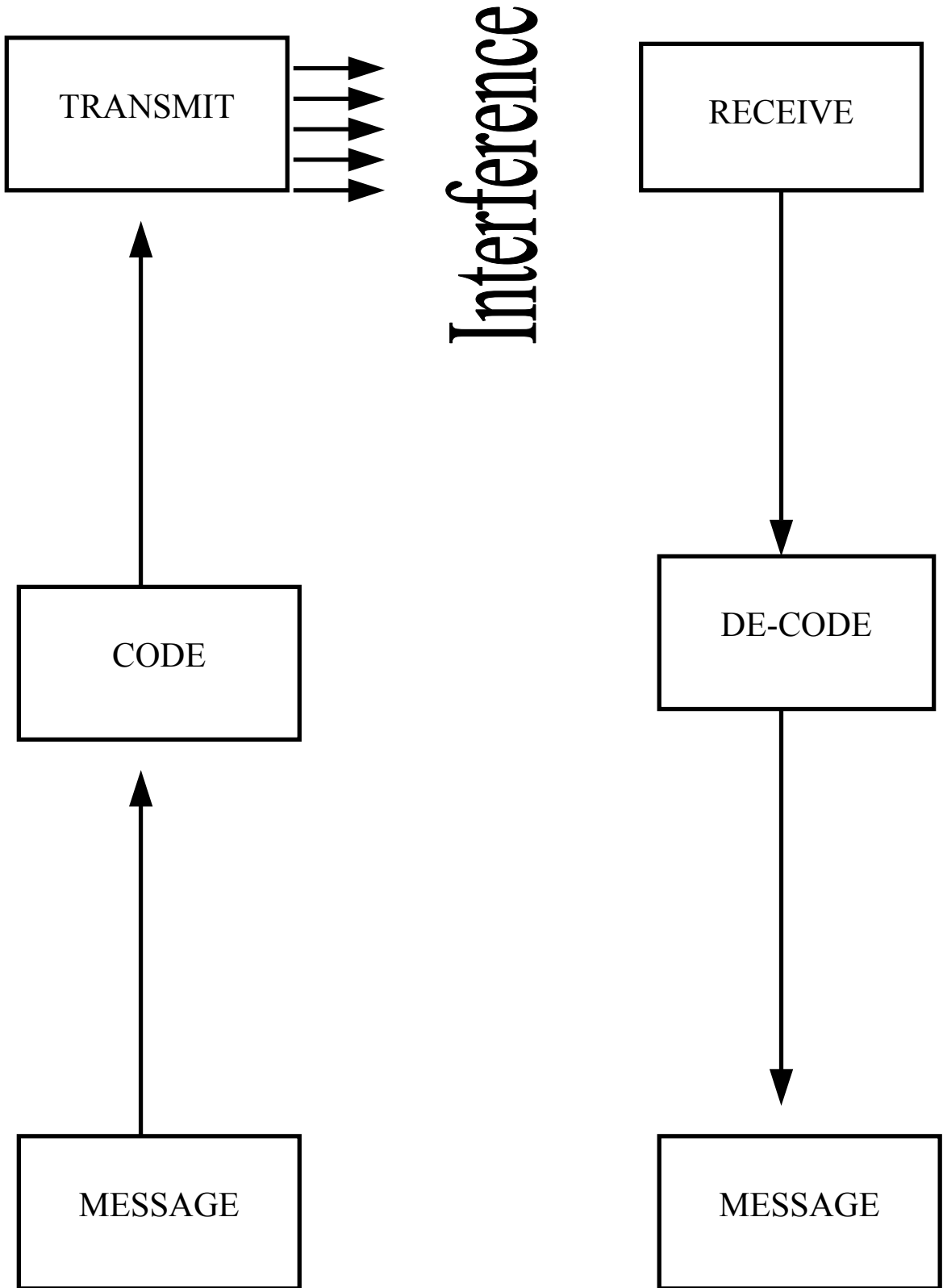
Better Listening Skills

Listens with undivided attention. Doesn't interrupt.

2. Allows space and some pauses – some silences can be positive.
3. Remembers what is said to you including the details.
4. Shaping the interview but allowing the individual to come to their own solution.
5. Open questions. Questions which draw out more information. Avoid yes/no questions.
6. Friendly, gentle, sincere, encouraging, genuinely interested.
7. Listens to what is being 'felt'. If you were in that place how might you feel?
8. Realistic and rational assessment of genuine choices.
9. Slows the interview down. Takes time.
10. Permits painful material to be expressed and even picks up on difficult issues.
11. Tries to remain calm even when the words are not easy to listen to.
12. Does not pretend to know when doesn't.
13. Clarifies issues and alternative actions. Uses person's own words to reflect back, repeats a lot, recaps and sums up.
14. Allows different feelings to be expressed even if doesn't agree.
15. Offers further time to follow up, as well as time for reflection on the interview.

Personal Comments

Communication



SOLER Checklist

- S** Face the counsellee **SQUARELY**. Turning towards them will indicate your involvement and suggest you are interested in what they have to say.

- O** Adopt an **OPEN POSTURE**. Head up, uncrossed arms and legs, and the minimum of hand-to-face gestures will indicate that you are involved and openly interested in what the counsellee has to say.

- L** **LEAN FORWARD** at various times during the interview. This indicates that you're following them and underscores your attentiveness. Don't over do this as leaning too far forward can be obtrusive and off-putting.

- E** Maintain good **EYE CONTACT** without staring. This encourages the counsellee to open up and talk. It conveys that you are interested in what they have to say and want to hear more.

- R** Try to **RELAX**. Don't fidget and display nervous mannerisms. Adopt a comfortable posture and really listen to the counsellee. This will convey your confidence in what you are doing and can help the counsellee relax as well.

Open Questions

Use Open questions (What, How, Why, Where and When) - when you want to open up areas for discussion or explore areas of learning, because they give you lots of information on the situation: e.g. 'What happened when the last new product was launched?' 'How did you handle the angry customer?' Although traditionally we include the 'why' question in this list, it can be more powerful to turn 'why' questions into 'what' and 'how' questions. For example, you could ask: 'Why was the product launch delayed?' If instead you ask, 'What were the causes of delay in the product launch?' you are focusing the respondent's mind directly on causes, which is in fact the information you want. The 'what' and 'how' questions are the most powerful of the open questions. The 'when' and 'where' questions are in fact asking for quite specific areas of information.

Although not actually questions, some other very useful phrases to use to obtain a wide range of information are:

'Tell me about . . .'

'Describe...'

'Paint the picture...', 'Tell the story...', 'Replay the experience...' (using whichever matches the language pattern of your respondent).

Case Studies

Sarah, a Grade 10 student could not write her final examination, because she did not have the money to pay for her registration. She is a good student and would have passed the exam easily. She wonders what are the possibilities of her being accepted back at school the next year. A year ago she gave birth to a baby boy and she knows that finishing her schooling career will give her a better chance to take care of her child properly. This experience makes her feel 'numb' and disorientated, out of focus. She wants to see you.

What feelings will Sarah experience?

What other words would describe her feelings?

Phil is a Grade 12 student from a wealthy family at a prestigious Secondary school. He is a merit student and has made plans to go and study Chartered Accounting. He is Chairperson of the SRC and active in a lot of extra-mural activities at school as well as church activities. He has applied at various Universities, but recently had a growing feeling that he should train to be a pastor in a church. Try as he may he can't shake it off. The consequences of pursuing such a decision are causing him to worry. Being a pastor would mean that he will earn a much lower salary? What would his friends and family think? His father has already told all his influential business partners that his son is going to study Chartered Accounting? Is this simply spiritual conceit? Why on earth would God call him?

How would you describe Phil's world?

What words would you use to describe his feelings?

Personal Comments

Good Responding Skills

Discern as accurately as possible all the counsellee's feelings.

Qualify your empathic response until you gain experience. 'I have a feeling that you are very lonely. Is that right?'

Don't ask too many questions. It is an exploration not an inquisition. If you need specific information ask a precise question. Use 'open' questions. Don't interrupt a positive, significant silence.

Use head nods and 'mm' to encourage the counsellee, or repeat the last few words.

Paraphrase or clarify as another way of prompting the counsellee. It also informs the counsellee you have been listening.

Avoid offering advice or making judgements.

Summarise what you have heard and link events and reactions to show a thread.

Don't interrupt and avoid introducing a new topic.

Don't speak too soon, too often and for too long.

Observe any reaction in the counsellee to your response.

LEARNING JOURNAL

My own significant learning experiences for today were

Listening & Responding Course Evaluation

What was most helpful to you?

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What was least helpful to you?

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What is the major area of learning for you?

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Any other comments.

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Date Venue Trainer