



# Stockport's Relational Round Up

Welcome to June 3 of our Relational Round Up for Stockport's children, families and schools. These newsletters are here to offer a regular well-being top tip for families and share good stories from across Stockport during our current new ways of living.



This week we build on the benefits of remaining open minded and curious which we explored last week, and focus on the importance of improving our listening skills in helping to keep our relationship with ourselves and others healthy.

Listening is our primary communication action and is central to success in both our life at home and at work.

We spend 80% of our waking hours communicating and over half of that time is spent listening.



However, as our own experience often teaches us, and as research shows, most of us do not listen well.

Just because a person acts like they hear a message does not mean that they have really listened to you.

It is really easy to get careless about listening, especially to those who we talk to the most such as our family or work colleagues.

Sometimes we assume that we know what the other person means or we pretend to listen while we are doing something else.

However, poor listening can be costly. It can cause us or others to lose time or lose respect. It can cause us or others to lose confidence or self-esteem. It can damage our relationships and often increases the chance of fall outs and conflict both at home and at work.

**“ MOST PEOPLE DO NOT *listen* with THE INTENT TO UNDERSTAND; THEY *listen* with THE INTENT TO REPLY. ”**

Stephen R. Covey





However, just like our other skills, our skill to listen can be practised and improved by remembering these top tips.

**Listening requires that we pay attention.** Be present and listen with full attention. Turn off the TV or put down your phone when at home. Turn off your phones and email notifications in meetings. Try to stop multitasking. When we put aside what we are doing we show the person speaking that we intend to listen to them.

**Listen with your body.** Face the person, make sensitive eye contact (not all people feel comfortable with eye contact) and acknowledge with nods. Try to keep your body still to show you are focused on that shared moment with the person you are listening to.

**Double-Check meaning.** Listening requires both hearing words and sensing feelings. We can check that we got the other person's message and meaning by asking questions to clarify our understanding and the other person's thought process. This gives the speaker a chance to make sure that we have heard and understood both what they said and how they feel.

**Think about where you are having your conversation.** If you feel that the conversation is sensitive or could be tricky, try to provide a safe and comfortable space to talk. Find somewhere where you won't be interrupted or overheard. Listening requires an attitude of openness and respect for what people wish to share. We may disagree, but being willing to really hear what the other person believes shows that we respect the other person.

**Remember it is ok to not have all the answers.** You can help simply by being present and connecting through actively listening. Often, we feel the urge to say something or don't know what to say, especially when dealing with strong emotions in a conversation. Try to hold back. Just being with the person, even when that person is not quite ready to share, is a good first step to take. Sometimes they will come back later to tell us more about the issue. A gentle touch or hug can show support when we don't know what to say.



It can be useful to stop and check, am I listening with my head or my heart?





# PRACTICE LISTENING

**LiSen.LiSen.LiSen.**  
**LISTENING SCAVENGER HUNT**

o Dog barking	o Radio playing
o Bird singing	o Washing machine
o Bee buzzing	o Kettle boiling
o Car beeping	o Door closing
o Clock ticking	o Tummy rumbling
o Train	o People laughing
o Wind blowing	o Children giggling
o Someone saying hello	o Trees swaying

**LiSen.LiSen.LiSen.**

**WHAT GREAT LISTENERS ACTUALLY DO**  
JACK ZENGER, JOSEPH FOLKMAN

- ASK QUESTIONS THAT PROMOTE DISCOVERY and INSIGHT  
TWO WAY DIALOG → CONSTRUCTIVE
- INTERACTIONS THAT BUILD SELF ESTEEM  
CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT  
TO OPENLY DISCUSS ISSUES/DIFFERENCES
- A CO-OPERATIVE CONVERSATION  
FEEDBACK FLOWS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS  
CHALLENGE/DISAGREE WITHOUT MAKING OTHER PERSON DEFENSIVE
- MAKE SUGGESTIONS SKILLFULLY  
THAT OPEN UP ALTERNATIVE PATHS

**LEVELS OF LISTENING**

- CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO DISCUSS
- CLEAR AWAY DISTRACTIONS AND MAKE EYE CONTACT
- UNDERSTAND THE SUBSTANCE ASK QUESTIONS, CONFIRM
- OBSERVE NON-VERBAL CLUES  
↳ 80% OF COMMUNICATION
- UNDERSTAND EMOTIONS & FEELINGS ABOUT TOPIC  
↳ EMPATHIZE
- HELP OTHER PERSON TO SEE ISSUE IN DIFFERENT LIGHT

**GOOD LISTENER IS NOT A SPONGE THAT ABSORBS BUT A TRAMPOLINE TO BOUNCE IDEAS OFF!**

Sketchnote by: Tanmay Vora | @tnvora | QAspire.com

Talk about ['What good listeners do'](#) with your family or play a [Listening Scavenger hunt](#) or actively focus on improving your family's listening skills. Or play some of these [Listening Games](#).

Playing this week's Wild Well-Being Experience 'Granny's Footsteps' is a great way to practice those listening skills. For more inspiring wild activities take a look at our [Forest School Resources](#).

## Games: Granny's Footsteps



### What you need:

- 3 or more people.
- A large space for the players to creep up on Granny.

### How to play:

- Choose a player to be 'Granny'.
- Granny stands at the front facing away from the other players.
- The other players stand in a line with a big distance between them and Granny.
- When the game starts, everyone tries to sneak up on Granny to tig her. They must be quiet, and tiptoe. Granny doesn't have good eyesight so if you're still, she won't see you!
- But, if Granny turns around and sees anyone moving, that person must go back to the start and begin again.
- If you manage to tig her, you win and become Granny!

### Extension ideas:

- Granny can have something tucked into her pocket or belt that people need to grab to win e.g. a scarf, a handkerchief or even her pants!
- Swap Granny for a Rabbit and the other players for Foxes (or your other favourite animals). Move like the animals move to sneak up on your prey!



