

Pastoral Skills Training Family Life Course
 Lesson 5: Listening
 Instructor Guide

Lesson Information	
Lesson Objectives	Recognize active listening and tracking skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how anxiety inhibits listening. • Identify attitudes that assist good listening.
Class Time: Presentation	Approximately 1 hour
Class Time: Discussion	Approximately 1 hour
Lesson Materials	
Webinar Presentation	Page 2
Webinar Discussion	Page 9
PowerPoint Slides for Webinar Presentation	05-slides.ppt
Supporting Lesson Materials	
Student Guide	The student advance sheet containing the objectives of the lesson and the materials required for participation
Student Readings	<i>How to Create a Listening Environment</i> (Donald Capps) 05-How-to-Create-a-Listening-Environment.pdf
	<i>Theology of Presence</i> (David Augsburger) 05-Theology-of-Presence.pdf

	Case Study 05-case-study.pdf
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Webinar Presentation		
Title	Description	Slide Number
Objectives	<p>At the end of this presentation, you should be able to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize active listening and tracking skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify how anxiety inhibits listening. ○ Identify attitudes that assist good listening. 	Slide 2
Part 1: Creating a Listening Environment		
How Anxiety Inhibits Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible intro example: A counselor is in a session with a couple that is dealing with the guilt and anger over an abortion the wife had received. The counselor is outright rude and impatient with the couple. When a supervisor discusses it with the counselor afterward, two things emerged: 1) the counselor had been blind to his rudeness until he was forced to sit and watch the session recording, and 2) the chaplain eventually realized that he was angry that he and his wife could never conceive, while this couple had “killed” their child. While struggling with those issues, he could not listen effectively to this couple. • Anxiety is the most difficult obstacle to overcome for effective listening. • Listening has an intentional and an attentional aspect, and both are needed for true listening to occur. • One might be very intentional – “I will make every effort to listen” – and yet be unable to attend to what is being said or communicated. We might call this the paradox of intentional listening. The more intentional one is, the greater the danger that one will not be attentional. 	Slide 4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional aspects are normally characterized by action (rephrasing, reflecting, etc.) • Attending is turning off your internal dialogue and listening; it is closer to doing nothing. • The more intentional one is may have more to do with the anxieties that are evoked in oneself by what the other person is saying. Intention may actually be avoidance. 	
Sources of Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subject matter itself produces anxiety. Ex: <i>Death, teenage pregnancy, sickness, etc.</i> • The subject matter produces anxiety when this particular person talks about it. Ex: <i>A couple just had an abortion and is talking about how sad they are the child is dead</i> • A particular person produces anxiety regardless of the subject matter. Ex: <i>A very attractive woman is talking about her affair. The counselor is strained out in his relationship with his spouse.</i> • The anxiety is due to anticipatory dread. Ex: <i>A deploying Soldier is talking about the fear of combat to a chaplain, who is also fearful.</i> • The anxiety is due to an inability to understand what the other person is saying. Ex: <i>Second-language difficulties; a crying parishioner who is mumbling; talking about subjects that the chaplain can't grasp</i> • The anxiety is due to one's awareness of differing points of view. Ex: <i>A Rush Limbaugh fan is talking to a left-leaning chaplain about how Democrats are ruining this country (or vice-versa).</i> • The anxiety is due to the counselor's current emotional or psychological health. Ex: <i>The chaplain's daughter just told him that she is pregnant.</i> 	Slide 5

<p>Fear Behind the Anxiety</p>	<p>Erik Erikson identifies several of the fears that lie behind our anxieties. He suggests that these fears can usually be traced to childhood and that at least some of these fears survive into adulthood and persist as a “sense of smallness” substratum in our otherwise adult minds. These include fear of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden or unexpected change. • Losing autonomy. • Being impoverished. • Being exposed. • Being closed up. • Losing one’s boundaries. • Being immobilized. • Being manipulated. • Being abandoned. • Not being guided. 	<p>Slide 6</p>
<p>Discussion Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How can the counselor’s anxiety have a negative effect on the counseling and helping process?</i> • <i>How can what a Soldier says create anxiety in the counselor or chaplain?</i> • <i>What do you do in a session when you get anxious? For example, do you start talking more or do you start dominating the conversation by giving direct advice? What is your signature struggle with anxiety?</i> • <i>Have you ever found yourself doing something in a counseling session that later you have to simply ask yourself, “What was I thinking?” or “What was that about?” or “What was the anxiety behind it?”</i> 	<p>Slide 7</p>

<p>Attitudes That Assist Good Listening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real listening means imagining yourself in the other’s experience. • Good listening requires a combination of three attitudes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention • Appreciation • Affirmation 	<p>Slide 8</p>
<p>Attitudes That Assist Good Listening: Attention</p>	<p>Better listening does not begin with techniques. Instead, it starts with making a sincere effort to pay attention to what is going on in the conversation partner’s private world of experience.</p>	<p>Slide 9</p>
<p>Attitudes That Assist Good Listening: Appreciation</p>	<p>One should assume, until proven otherwise, that the other person has a valid and valuable perspective on the problem or concern being discussed. The hardest situation in which to be genuinely appreciative is when the other’s point of view is critical of oneself.</p> <p>Appreciative listening is often silent but never passive. It means focusing on the other and on what the other is saying. It often means asking questions for clarification and elaboration.</p>	<p>Slide 10</p>
<p>Attitudes That Assist Good Listening: Affirmation</p>	<p>Affirmation is one’s understanding of what one has heard. Silence is ambiguous, so it is necessary that we communicate—with words—what we have understood the other person to be saying.</p>	<p>Slide 11</p>
<p>Conditions That Support Good Listening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate communication of empathy • Respect for the other person in the helping relationship • A manner of communication that is concrete and genuine • Appropriate self-disclosure • An ability to use confrontation when necessary • A focus on the immediate 	<p>Slide 12</p>

Ask for questions.		
Part 2: A Theology of Presence		
Presence	<p>Question: <i>What does “presence” mean in the context of pastoral counseling?</i></p> <p>Presence is a rich, primary word for pastoral care and for pastoral counseling. A counselor is pastoral when she or he is truly there for others, is fully present to others, and recognizes that this presence is in the name of God, who has called the counselor to be available at a depth beyond normal association.</p> <p>Authentic presence begins as an attitude on the part of the counselor, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith in God and that he is at work in the counselor and this person. • Patience with God’s timing. • Confidence that this is not about me. God will accomplish his goals whether or not the counselor is skilled, but it may be through the counselor. • An attitude of prayer or awareness of God’s presence in the moment. <p>It is often characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calmness • Genuineness • Hopefulness (when in doubt, smile) <p>It can result in a depth of communication occurring that is beyond words or style or technique or theory or theology. It is presence gifted by Presence.</p>	Slide 15
The Culturally	Question: <i>Why is it important to be culturally sensitive in counseling?</i>	Slide 16

Capable Counselor	<p>Presence requires taking a person seriously enough to understand him/her. Being culturally sensitive is part of that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The culturally aware counselors have a clear understanding of their own values and basic assumptions. • Culturally aware counselors have a capacity for welcoming, entering into, and prizing other worldviews without negating their legitimacy. They are curious, respectful, and slow to pass judgment. • Culturally aware counselors seek to find elements in parishioners' cultures that can give them strength to negotiate their current callings. 	
The Culturally Encapsulated Counselor	<p>Compare that (the culturally capable counselor) to the culturally encapsulated counselor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The culturally encapsulated counselor is one who tends to stereotype instead of getting to know individuals. • The culturally encapsulated counselor is unwilling or unable to learn how things can look differently to someone who has a different perspective. They tend to see things as absolute, black and white. • The culturally encapsulated counselor has usually failed to listen well. 	Slide 17
Four Levels of Cultural Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of superficial or very visible cultural traits (stereotypes) 2. Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own 3. Awareness of the meanings of the cultural traits that contrast sharply with one's own 4. Awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider 	Slide 18
Discussion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What role does cultural awareness play in counseling efforts?</i> • <i>Have you experienced a conversation in which understanding a culture played a role in effective communication? What happened?</i> • <i>How would you describe presence?</i> 	Slide 19

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Can you describe a time you felt someone really “got” you and a problem you were going through, and then was able to be helpful without actually doing anything or giving advice?</i>	
Ask for questions.		
Give reading and case study assignments to prepare for the discussion webinar. Strongly encourage the students to do the reading assignments, as it will contribute significantly to their roles as chaplains and counselors.		
End webinar.		

Webinar Discussion

Case Study:

C = Counselor

S = Soldier

Setting: Chaplain and female Soldier are sitting in chairs across from each other in what is apparently the chaplain's office.

S: ...and I'm just not sure I can deploy again with this unit.

C: To Afghanistan?

S: Right.

C: But do you have a choice? You've already got orders, right? I'm not sure I see how you could keep from going.

S: Oh, there's always ways to not go. I could always come down with something, or get pregnant.

C: Wow, I guess I never thought of it that way. I guess you could. Do you think you'd do something like that just to avoid going again?

S: I just can't go over there with this unit again. I can't face the daily harassment with no place left to escape.

C: This sounds serious. I guess I just didn't see how those comments hurt you. Sorry. Does your platoon leader understand how your treatment left you feeling?

S: Oh, he doesn't get it. Doesn't want to get it. The CO has been supportive at times, but I can tell he just doesn't want any problems in the platoon. He just wants the trucks to roll on order.

C: Isn't there an equal opportunity officer or someone like that you can go to?

S: Oh sure, and I suppose you could say something too. But that would just get me branded as an outsider. I've seen that before. It never goes well.

C: So it sounds like you're just trapped. That must be terrible.

S: Yeah. [*Begins crying quietly.*]

C: What did I just say there? I'm sorry if I hurt you.

S: [*Haltingly*] No, but that hit it. I'm just trapped. There's no way out.

C: But you just mentioned some ways you could get out of this unit.

S: But none that my mom would be proud of.

C: Hmm, so it's important to you to do things your family would be proud of.

S: Yeah.

C: Wow, you've really kept your pride through all this, haven't you?

S: So far, but it ain't over yet...

Case Study Discussion Questions:

- 1) What might be a source of anxiety in this conversation that could prevent the chaplain from listening effectively?
- 2) Do you see any comments that suggest that the Chaplain may have been "hooked" at some point in this conversation?
- 3) How do you think this conversation would have strengthened this soldier?
- 4) What is a question you'd ask next if you were this chaplain?