

## Games and activities to develop active listening:

Trainer note: choose one of the following. Only add extra if the participants have limited experience of active listening. Print on card or laminate the instructions for the exercise you choose.

### Exercise 1

#### ◆ Orienting to speaker

- Form groups of three – one talker, one listener, one observer
- Talker to spend 3 mins talking about any problems they anticipate as a Learning Partner
- Listener to try and use the principles of Empathy, Acceptance, Genuineness, Concreteness
- Observer to answer the question – How well does the listener really understand their partner?

### Exercise 1

#### ◆ Body language

- Work in pairs. One person tells an anecdote. The other person models various types of body language both positive and negative:

##### Positive

- Looking directly at the speaker
- responding with affirming comments or questions

##### Negative

- arm folder, legs crossed
- distracted, looking elsewhere or writing notes

Swap over and repeat activity.

#### **Debrief:**

What did you learn?

Were you able to tell your anecdote or did the body language of the listener discourage you?

Did you feel comfortable telling your anecdote?

What listening behaviour was most helpful to you?

As the listener, which body language enabled you to listen most effectively?

Were you distracted easily? Did the position you sat in help you to focus on the speaker?

Basic level if participants are very inexperienced at active listening:

◆ One person reads a story or an incident for everyone else to listen. Once she is done with it, any other person from the group is asked to repeat it. The one who can retell the story as accurately as possible, wins!

◆ Each player is called up and asked two or three questions about their hobby, likes and interests. One person is assigned to note down the answers against the names of the players. Now, random players are asked to come up and correctly identify which member answered what

◆ Clap and Follow. This active listening game for adults requires complete concentration and a keen ear to understand exactly what is going on. A leader comes forth and relates the instructions which go like this, for example:

1 clap = Stand

2 claps = Hop on place

3 claps = Rub your belly

And so on. The leader then starts alternating between 1 clap, 2 claps and so on. The group has to be able to listen with complete concentration and follow through. You could even include the elimination round. The person who fails to come through with the action is eliminated. This continues till there is one clear winner.