

# YOUTH SPIRIT PROGRAM



## Chapter 10: Listening



## The goals of this chapter

...are to learn about effective listening. The importance of listening is illustrated through Swinomish storytelling and other traditional activities. Swinomish values stress respect and the belief that you must be an effective listener before you can become an effective communicator. Information about methamphetamines is also included.

## Age Groups: Middle and High School Youth

**Time: 30 minutes**

### Youth will:

- learn about the cultural and personal value of listening
- learn about oral history, storytelling, song learning
- learn how to listen to our Elders in a respectful way

## Materials

- Whiteboard/flipchart + marker(s)
- Youth Handouts
- Question Box/ paper
- Timer or phone for keeping track of activity times
- Pencils/ pens

## Preparation

- Preview Lesson plan
- Find Lushootseed word or Swinomish phrase meaning “that is all” or “the end.” – to be shared during lesson.
- Find examples from the Swinomish Tribe/community about listening
- Find examples of your Tribe/community practices of witnessing/listening
- The facilitator and co-facilitator will do an exercise that includes disrespectful listening and respectful listening. Prepare a story about what he/she did the previous weekend, while the co-facilitator models the disrespectful and respectful listening behaviors
- Preview the Handouts for this lesson to determine what is most appropriate for your youths’ levels and your goals. Print enough copies of the lesson handouts for each youth.

## Cultural Component Option(s)

Note: additional time needed for this activity

### Materials

- Talking sticks / rock
- Cultural activity materials

### Preparation:

- Consider inviting an elder to share traditional problem-solving strategies



## Welcome & Group Check in

5 minutes

*Welcome youth, introduce yourself, have guest speakers and youth introduce themselves and direct youth where to sit.*

Say, "Before we continue, do you have any questions or comments about the last chapter? Was anyone able to get to Step 6 or 7 (Acting and Reflecting) on your Problem Solving Plan?" Follow up on Problem Solving Plans steps, as needed.

Say, "Tribal communities have put incredible emphasis on listening; listening to our Elders, listening to Nature, Creator, to ourselves and each other. In the Swinomish community we have grown up knowing to 'Listen to our Elders.' Listening is the most important skill for communication. Today we are going to talk about what it means to 'listen' in Native communities, witnessing protocols, effective listening, and we will get a chance to role play different listening styles."

### **Question Box Q&A**

Respond to questions left in the question box

## Icebreaker

Time Varies

*Use the "[Icebreaker](https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/stand-alone-lessons/)" activity guide found on Healthy Native Youth (<https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/stand-alone-lessons/>) to find an icebreaker appropriate for your group (i.e. small or large group, new or established group, etc.)*



# Doodle Page

Feel free to draw while you listen.  
It can help you learn better!



## Listening in Native Communities 10 minutes

Say, "In Native cultures, listening is closely tied to oral traditions and storytelling. Listening is not just about listening to people, but is also about listening to everything. It's about paying attention and observing your surroundings, see what is going on around you. It's about paying attention to subtle things that can help tell you what's going on like when the feather fan or the eagle staff keeps the beat of the drum. It's about being aware of what your Elders and those around you say without their words."

Say, "Native people often communicate in very different ways than non-Native people. Often the most important message comes at the end of what they are saying. Their talking style is usually not as fast and to the point as non-Native people – sometimes Native people are saying one thing and non-Natives are hearing another thing."

Say, "It is important in Native culture to let people tell their whole story uninterrupted. It is also especially important to listen carefully to Elders who are mindful of their words and take their time when sharing wisdom and council. There are many cues to watch for when communicating with or listening to stories from Elders. Watch for the pauses, allow the time for quiet breaks in conversations. It is not a time to interrupt, offer answers or change the subject. Another aspect to keep in mind is 'eye contact' – it is not polite to look or stare in the eyes when listening to Elders. It is also impolite to take notes while an Elder is talking. They are to receive 100% attention."

Say, "In the Lushootseed language there is even a word to communicate when a story is done or when one is done speaking. You would know to listen until you heard the word or phrase [XX] meaning "that is all" or "the end."

Say, "You may be used to communicating one way within your family and another way in outside communities."

*Ask youth if they have experienced this difference in ways of communicating and listening.*



## Listening in Native Communities Continued...

Say, "Is listening part of knowing your place in the community?"

*Allow time for participants to respond.*

Say, "Listening is important when you are part of a team. For example, traditional Native whale hunters needed to listen carefully to the leader so that they knew what to do and when, and so that the hunt could be successful and safe."

Say, "Is listening important on the Canoe Journey? Why?"

*Allow time for participants to respond.* Protocols or expected rules during Canoe Journey:

- It is not proper to talk or get up to leave when someone has the floor, or talk to someone next to you, or be on your cell phone. It is considered disrespectful. They are speaking from the heart when on the floor. If someone is sharing words, or a family song, or a mask – that is a meaningful and significant gift and deserves the respect of uninterrupted attention and respectful listening
- It is not proper to cross in front of Elders when you enter or leave the building. Cross behind or go around when walking. Elders are often called to witness events and to disrupt or interrupt their attention is not ok
- Often there is someone at the door who is responsible for monitoring the event. If they find someone disrespecting the protocols or the speakers, they will come and ask that person to stop or leave
- These common courtesies or protocols are also expected for other traditional ceremonial events – not just the canoe journey

Say, "In what ways is listening important in other parts of your life?"

*Allow time for participants to respond.*



# Listening in Native Communities Continued...

Say, "What people are is important for you to listen to?"

*Allow time for responses, and list them on the board. List may include:*

## **Adults**

- Over 18 years old
- 30 – 50
- Older than you
- Elders, Parents, Teachers

## **During Canoe Journey**

- Weather, wind
- Whales, animals, birds
- Paddle, feeling
- Eagles
- Water, tides

## **Community leaders**

- Skippers
- Song and Dance
- Youth Center Staff / Education Building

Say, "Listening doesn't always happen with your ears. It includes listening to yourself, to your inner voice. It also can include listening to animals and nature around you. Traditional Native beliefs taught that certain animals were messengers about certain things."

*[Provide other examples from the Swinomish Tribe/community about listening]*

Say, "What are some ways to listen?"

*Allow time for responses and write on the board. List may include:*

- Eye contact (eye movement can sometimes indicate excuses, lies. Eye contact can indicate respect, humbleness in non-Native contexts)
- Body language (crossed arms – closed)
- Patience
- Listening to the whole story, listening for lessons and meaning
- Paying attention
- Being respectful
- Listening with your heart
- Having a clear heart and mind
- Traditional listening

## **Witnessing Protocol**

Say, "Spend time on what traditional witnessing is and the importance of very close listening when serving as a witness for the community."

*[Provide examples of your Tribe/community practices of witnessing/listening]*





# Listening in Native Communities Continued...

## **Effective Listening**

Say, "Effective listening takes practice and effort. We don't often think that it takes much effort because we are listening all the time. But think about it, if a person is not a good listener, what is he/she/they like?"

*Allow for responses.*

Say, "Effective listening is an essential skill for making and keeping relationships. If you are a good listener, you'll notice that others are drawn to you."

Say, "Listening is a commitment to understanding how other people feel, how they see their world. Listening is a compliment because it says to the other person, "I care about what's happening to you. Your life and your experiences are important. What are some skills necessary to listen effectively?"

*List the youths responses on the board.*

*Distribute handout - Some Tips for Respectful Listening. Discuss the handout suggestions as well as different cultural ways of listening.*

# Tips for Respectful Listening

Want to show you're really listening? Here's some tips to help:

- Stop whatever you are doing
- Look at the person
- Keep a good distance between you and the speaker
- Don't turn away from the speaker
- Sit up straight
- Nod your head and say things like: "yes," "I understand," and "I see what you mean," to show the speaker you understand what he/she is saying
- If you don't understand, let the person know that
- Don't fake listening!
- Repeat back phrases to clarify what the person is saying
- Ask questions to show that you are interested in what the person is saying
- Don't interrupt the speaker



# Role Play Listening Skills

5 minutes

Say, "Now I would like to role model different kinds of listening skills."

*The facilitator and co-facilitator will do an exercise that includes disrespectful listening and respectful listening. The facilitator will tell a story about what he/she did the previous weekend, while the co-facilitator models the disrespectful listening behaviors like, acting bored, interrupting, looking at their watch and acting distracted.*

Say, "What kind of listener was this listener? What made this listener a disrespectful listener?"

*Allow for responses.*

Say, "A disrespectful listener will read or watch TV or text on phone while listening, will act bored, will interrupt, will look at his/her watch and will act distracted.

*The facilitator and co-facilitator will do an exercise that includes disrespectful listening and respectful listening. The facilitator will tell a story about what he/she did the previous weekend, while the co-facilitator models the respectful listening behaviors like, stopping what they are doing, looking at the person who is talking, nodding his/her head saying "uh- huh," "I understand" or "I see what you mean," and not interrupting and will act interested*

Say, "What made this listener a respectful listener?"

*Allow for responses.*

Say, "A respectful listener will stop what they are doing, will look at the person who is talking, will nod his/her head saying "uh- huh," "I understand" or "I see what you mean," will not interrupt and will act interested."

Say, "There are many cultural differences in being a good listener. Can you think how individuals from various cultures or different generations might listen in different ways other than what was mentioned here?"

*Allow for responses and make suggestions if no responses are given. List may include:*

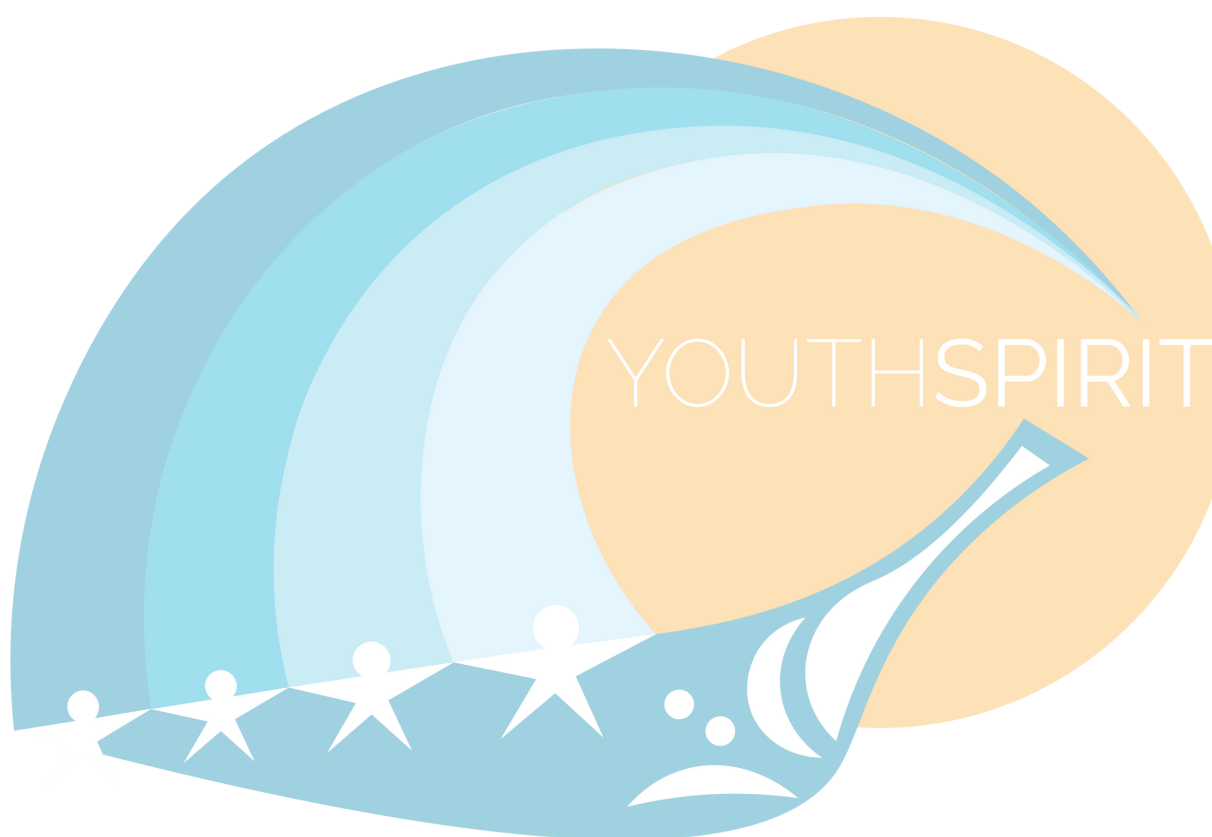
- Limited eye contact
- May look away (either down or in the air)
- May stand very close
- May not give any indication that they are listening (e.g., long silences, no verbal responses, no head nods)
- May need to be active while listening (have something like knitting or doodling to keep hands active for example)

# Cultural Component Option(s)

If time allows, consider:

- Have people come in and tell stories (or listen to a recorded story), then ask youth to tell back what they heard
- Explore cultural activities that require good listening skills: song and dance, canoe carving, weaving
- Make a talking stick, find a special rock or other items and have youth take turns talking and listening

*\*If you choose this option, this will add additional time allotted in the outline.*





# Rx Drug Abuse

5 minutes

Say, "The next drugs that we will be addressing are prescription drugs. Before we look at the handout, let's see how much you already know about prescription drug abuse. Who can tell me what prescription drug abuse is?"

*Allow for responses.*

Say, "Prescription drug abuse is taking prescription drugs that are prescribed for someone else or taking them in a manner or dose that is not prescribed by a doctor. One example would be someone who takes their brother's Ritalin when they have not been written a prescription by a doctor for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder."

Say, "Another example would be someone who was prescribed OxyContin for pain, but who takes it in large doses instead of following the doctor's instructions. Prescription drugs can help people when taken under the guidance of a doctor for a diagnosed health issue. Some people think it is OK to abuse these drugs because they usually come from a doctor and aren't illegal "Street Drugs." However, if prescription drugs are misused, they can cause serious harm or death. Who can tell me what they think Opioids are?"

*Allow for responses.*

Say, "Opioids, also called prescription narcotics or painkillers, are most often used to treat pain. Common prescription painkillers are OxyContin, Vicodin, methadone, Percocet, Percodan, codeine, and dyphenoxylate (Lomotil). They affect the brain and central nervous system by blocking feelings of pain. They are often misused by being injected or snorted. (Review initial effects and effects of heavy use). Who can tell me what they think Central Nervous System Depressants are?"

*Allow for responses.*

Say, "Central Nervous System Depressants are sometimes called tranquilizers or sedatives because they slow down the brain. Two kinds of depressants are barbiturates and benzodiazepines. Barbiturates (i.e. Nembutal) are used to help people with anxiety and sleep problems. Benzodiazepines (i.e. Valium, Librium, Xanax) are used to help people with anxiety, panic attacks and sleep problems. (Review initial effects and effects of heavy use). Who can tell me what they think Stimulants are?"



# Rx Drug Abuse

Continued...

*Allow for responses.*

Say, "Stimulants (i.e. Ritalin, Adderall) increase alertness, attention and energy. Stimulants used to be prescribed for many different reasons, but now they are used to mostly treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression or narcolepsy (when people fall asleep suddenly). Review initial effects and effects of heavy use."

*Distribute handout - Prescription Drugs and briefly discuss.*

# Prescription Drugs

## What Is Prescription Drug Abuse?

Prescription drug abuse is taking prescription drugs that are prescribed for someone else or taking them in a manner or dose that is not prescribed by a doctor. One example would be someone who takes their brother's Ritalin when they don't have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Another example would be someone who was prescribed OxyContin for pain, but who takes it in large doses instead of following the doctor's instructions. Prescription drugs can help people when taken under the guidance of a doctor for a real health issue. Some people think it is OK to abuse these drugs because they usually come from a doctor and aren't illegal "Street Drugs." However, if prescription drugs are misused, they can cause serious harm or death.

Three kinds of prescription drugs are most commonly misused:

- Opioids (painkillers)
- Central Nervous System Depressants (tranquilizers)
- Stimulants

### Opioids

OPIOIDS, also called prescription narcotics or painkillers, are most often used to treat pain. Common prescription painkillers are Saboxin, OxyContin, Vicodin, methadone, Percocet, Percodan, codeine, and dyphenoxylate (Lomotil). They affect the brain and central nervous system by blocking feelings of pain. They are often misused by being injected or snorted or smoked.

**Slang terms:** 80s (oxy), 30s (perc), beans, pills, OC, zanny bars

#### Initial Effects

Euphoria • lack of pain • sleepiness • nausea • constipation • difficulty breathing, lose weight, hyper-active

#### Effects of Heavy Use

Heavy use of painkillers can lead to addiction. Withdrawal symptoms include restlessness, bone and muscle pain, sleep problems, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes and involuntary leg movements. A single overdose of painkillers can cause death by shutting down respiration (breathing). Combining the use of opioids with other prescription drugs can increase the risk of death.

### Central Nervous System (CNS) Depressants

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS) DEPRESSANTS are sometimes called tranquilizers or sedatives because they slow down the brain. Two kinds of depressants are barbiturates and benzodiazepines. Barbiturates (i.e. Nembutal) are used to help people with anxiety and sleep problems. Benzodiazepines (i.e. Valium, Librium, Xanax) are used to help people with anxiety, panic attacks and sleep problems.

#### Initial Effects

Drowsiness or sleepiness • calming effect • feeling uncoordinated

#### Effects of Heavy Use

Heavy use of CNS depressants can lead to addiction. Withdrawal symptoms include increased brain activity which can lead to seizures. Combining CNS depressants with other drugs, especially alcohol, can slow down the heart and respiration and may lead to death.

### Stimulants

STIMULANTS (i.e. Ritalin, Adderall) increase alertness, attention and energy. Stimulants used to be prescribed for many different reasons, but now they are used to mostly treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression or narcolepsy (when people fall asleep suddenly).

#### Initial Effects

Increased alertness and energy • increased blood pressure, heart rate and breathing

#### Effects of Heavy Use

Heavy use of stimulants can lead to severe anger, paranoia, heart problems, seizures and even death. Heavy stimulant use can also lead to addiction. Withdrawal symptoms include depression, severe tiredness or fatigue, and problems sleeping. Overdose can lead to an irregular heart beat, heart failure or seizures. These risks increase if taken with other drugs or alcohol.

# Closing and Final Reflections

5 minutes

*Distribute the handout - What have I learned today? Encourage youth to write what they have learned. If necessary, draw on the board and give the youth a few examples of what they may have learned from this chapter.*

Say, "We learned about respecting our Elders by following their example of listening. We learned how traditional teachings were handed down through oral history, artwork, song and dance, and how observing and being an active listener is important in gaining knowledge of Swinomish traditions. This addresses our Mental health."

Say, "We learned how the cultural and personal value of listening can affect our understanding and beliefs when following protocols and traditions. This addresses our Spiritual health."

Say, "We learned about storytelling and how important listening and paying attention in a respectful way is for learning from our Elders and others. We learned that listening is crucial when actively participating in protocols and ceremony. This addresses our Physical health."

Say, "We learned about how we are connected to our Swinomish way of life by following the example of our Elders and leaders when listening and learning about protocols. We learned how important it is to feel proud of ourselves in carrying on tradition. This addresses our Emotional health."

*Mention the next meeting time, location and the topic that will be covered, if applicable.*

*If time allows, close with a poem, song, story or tradition that highlights the activity concept.*





Chapter 10  
Youth Handout  
#3

# Journal Space

## What have I learned Today?

Think about your mental, spiritual, social, and physical self.  
Then draw, doodle, or write about what you have strengthen  
today.