

Value of Listening webinar

20th April 2022

Supporting information

Understanding and experiencing ‘Spaces for Listening’

‘Spaces for Listening’ is a simple, structured approach which was developed by Charlie Jones* and I, which we have been working with together for the past two years. In the webinar, I spoke about the approach briefly, my personal experiences of it, and how ‘Spaces for Listening’ can be helpful and counter-cultural.

There is more information on page 2 about the process of ‘Spaces for Listening’. It’s really very simple. Our view is that anyone who comes along to experience a session is then able to go ahead and facilitate sessions in their own local context.

If you would like to hear more about the approach, then please access this [webinar](#) which we did for the Scottish Government National Well-being Hub in August 2021. It includes a short video clip which is an excerpt of a ‘Spaces for Listening’ session, followed by a conversation with several people who have experienced the approach and used it locally.

If you would like to read more about the approach and its impact, here is a blog we wrote in November 2020: [Spaces for Listening](#). And here are a couple of other blogs which explore further aspects of the power of listening: [Still listening](#) (June 2021) and [Trust in the spaces between us](#) (October 2021). Follow #SpacesForListening on Twitter for more direct feedback from people who’ve experienced it.

The best way to understand the approach is to experience it. If you’d like to experience a ‘Spaces for Listening’ session, you are welcome to join one of our weekly sessions which are publicly and voluntarily available (we host 1 or 2 sessions over Zoom each week). Email Brigid Russell on brigidb@btinternet.com for the forthcoming dates and to book a place.

Brigid Russell
@brigidrussell51
9th May 2022

* Charlie can be found on Twitter @charlie_psych

Books on listening

Kathryn Mannix (2021) Listen: how to find the words for tender conversations. William Collins

Rachel Naomi Remen (2006) Kitchen Table Wisdom: stories that heal. Riverhead Books.

Spaces for Listening – information sheet

A chance to be heard

Many of us are seeking to understand more about what's going on, a chance to be heard, and to consider where we might go next. If we are going to find more sustainable and humane ways to move forward from the Covid-19 crisis, then we need better quality conversations.

What if we gathered together and shared with each other: how we are feeling, and what's on our minds? Such space for listening gives us the breathing space: to find out and share what is going on for each of us; and, to hear where others are too.

A structured space

A simple, structured process creates a space in which we each have an equal opportunity to share and listen. There is no hierarchy. We all need to be aware to look after our own selves in this space, as we might find it enables thoughts and feelings to be expressed in ways that can feel moving, or even a little unsettling.

The structure of three rounds of timed contributions (2min per person, in each round) provides a safe, confidential space in which we can each choose to open up and explore our ideas and feelings. It's always okay to pass in any particular round. Given that we are each sharing our personal experiences, it is really helpful if we join the call from a quiet space where we won't be interrupted.

An experience to spark change

We believe that the best way to understand the quality of this simple, structured approach is to experience it. Each Space is a one-off. However, our experience is that 'Spaces for Listening' enable us to go on and have conversations elsewhere which are purposeful and meaningful.

An outline of the structure

The facilitator is also an equal participant in the process. Each of us has 2min in turn, timed by the facilitator. Each of us can use our time to say whatever we like.

We do not interrupt each other or open up into a general conversation.

- Round 1: "How are you and what is on your mind".
- Round 2: "An invitation to share your reflections and feelings now, and in the light of what you have heard in Round 1".
- Round 3: "An invitation to share something you might take away from the call, and also to offer some appreciation to any aspects of the call that have resonated with you".

At the end of Round 3, the session ends.

Further information

If you would like to find out more, or offer any feedback following on from the experience, please contact **Brigid Russell** (brigidb@btinternet.com / @brigidrussell51) or **Charlie Jones** (charlie.jones@nbt.nhs.uk / @charlie_psych)