

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY—LISTENING

Listening is a core competency in all relationships. The ABCs of Inclusion (AWARE BUILD CHANGE) remind us that an important step in the BUILD phase is to practice better listening skills. If you want to form relationships where you earn trust and create psychological safety then it is imperative that you truly hear the people you are engaged with each day. Explore this important skill deeply over the next four weeks by interacting with new content to examine your thoughts and actions.

WEEK 1

READ → **WATCH**
 Seven truths about listening → Two radical ideas about listening

JOURNAL
 What feedback are you receiving on your listening assessment? How does that feel? What area(s) will you seek to change? Write a plan to make your intentions a reality.

ACT
 Focus on assessment. Practice your awareness by seeking out feedback from the people you are interacting with. Tell them your goal is to determine what you're doing well or need to improve to be a better listener. Ask: Do I look distracted or very engaged when we are talking? Do I listen to your entire thought, or do I frequently interrupt during our conversations? Do I frequently paraphrase your thoughts when I reply to convey that I listened and understood your ideas, thoughts or points?

WEEK 2

READ → **WATCH**
 Active listening skills, examples and exercises → The power of listening

JOURNAL
 Are you listening with full attention? What are your primary distractions? What is your plan to eliminate distractions? How are you listening to the human being behind the words? What relationship would you like to transform by listening?

ACT
 Focus on mindfulness. Reflect each morning on the importance of listening before you start your day. Practice the pause this week. Allow a few seconds to pass when the people you are in conversation with finish a thought. Be comfortable with silence. Practice having conversations where you do not interrupt others.

WEEK 3

READ → **WATCH**
 Use active listening to coach others → The power of deliberate listening

JOURNAL
 What is your focus on questions producing? Are you effectively resisting the urge to be right and be the provider of solutions? How are your questions demonstrating empathy? Are you feeling more connected in your conversations?

ACT
 Focus on questions. Practice limiting your comments and increasing your questions in conversations. Ask questions that foster connection and seek greater understanding.

WEEK 4

READ → **WATCH**
 How to practice active listening → How to actively listen to others

JOURNAL
 How are you practicing yes, and? How are you denying someone's reality? Are you forcing someone to reframe their reality? When has your failure to listen and accept created conflict?

ACT
 Focus on being present. Practice being open in your interactions and releasing expectations. Pay attention to yourself, the environment and the people you are having conversations with.

Becoming a better listener requires mindfulness, practice, and a commitment to be present in each interaction. The work you are doing will strengthen this skill and improve relationships in every part of your life. Keep going.