

D1: ACTIVE LISTENING

AIM

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- ▶ A better understanding of the importance of men listening to women's experiences, requests and demands as a first step in taking action in support of women's political participation.
- ▶ Practiced their skills in active listening, in order that they can better support and collaborate with women in their struggle for greater political participation.

Time: 45 mins

Materials:

- ▶ None

STEP-BY-STEP

1. Explain the aims of the session. Remind the participants that listening to those most affected by a social problem is a necessary first step in strategizing to address it in, order to be guided by their experiences and recommendations. In order to deal with problems of patriarchal masculinities, as they show up in the party/organization and society as a whole, it is essential for men to listen to those most affected by the harms of patriarchal masculinities, namely women and gender and sexual minorities.
2. Explain that listening is a skill ; it can be practiced and improved. Explain that this session will discuss and practice the skills of "active listening". Emphasize that the first point to note about active listening is that it means listening with the whole body and not only the ears.
3. Ask participants to get into pairs. Ask each pair to sit back-to-back. Ask one member of the pair to speak (about any subject) for 2-3 minutes while their partner listens. Then swap the roles.
4. De-brief this exercise by asking what it was like to listen to someone when you could not see them. Ask what it was like to be listened to by someone whom you could not see.
5. Ask participants to go back into their pairs, but this time ask the two people to sit facing each other. Repeat the exercise, with one person speaking and the other listening and then swap the roles.
6. De-brief by asking the group what the differences were between listening to each other back-to-back and listening to each other face-to-face. Ask the "speakers":
 - ▶ *What did it feel like to not be able to see the person you were talking to?*
 - ▶ *To what extent did you feel heard or not heard?*
 - ▶ *In the face-to-face part of the exercise, what did it feel like to see and be seen by the person listening to you?*
 - ▶ *What did they do with their eyes, and their whole body, to show that they were listening to you?*
7. Ask the "listeners":
 - ▶ *What did it feel like to not be able to see the person you were listening to?*
 - ▶ *In the face-to-face part of the exercise, what did it feel like to see and be seen by the person speaking to you?*
 - ▶ *What did you do with your eyes, and your whole body, to show that you were listening intently to them?*

8. Lead a general discussion about why it is important for men to listen well to those most affected by the harms of patriarchal masculinities (namely, women and gender and sexual minorities), and the basic skills involved in active listening. Brainstorm with the group the main reasons why many men don't listen carefully enough to women's experiences of patriarchal masculinities, both inside the party/organization or in society as a whole.
9. Invite participants to share their own experiences of witnessing (a) a man not listening to a woman when she was speaking at a party/organizational meeting and how that affected the woman and (b) a man showing good active listening skills in listening to a woman when she was speaking at a party/organizational meeting and how that affected the woman. Discuss with the group what men can do to challenge and support other men to listen to women, in order to be guided by their experiences and recommendations in challenging patriarchal masculinities.
10. Refer to the Notes for the Facilitator to ensure that you cover the main learning points in summing up the activity.