

# **Tool: Communication Exercise in Summarizing.**

## ***Goals***

Enhancing effective listening in a mentoring conversation.

## ***Conditions***

The learning group has had some experiences together and is acquainted with each other.

Summarizing is a pre exercise for role playing and deepens the insight of what listening is about.

## ***Process***

10 minutes: Theory of summarizing.

Introduce the art of summarizing by naming the characteristics of good summarizing. A summary is clarifying, aimed at the most important issues, giving peace [the listener understands me] and summing up.

The criteria of summarizing are: a summary must be short, complete, uncoloured [by the feelings of the listener] and in 'fresh words', which means that the listener does not echo the same words just said, but uses an synonym.

*KISS principle: Keep it short and simple*

Also the information is given that a summary can be made of the content, the emotions or of both categories.

10 minutes: Explaining the exercise.

Explain to the group that groups of three, A, B, and C. are working together in a carousel. In the first round A and B. take their turn to do the exercise. First they choose a subject they can disagree about. The trainer names some examples like 'everyone must be in the opportunity to have a dog' against 'no dogs allowed in the inner city'. Person C is the observer. A and B agree about which position they take in this discussion. Explain that A. starts to pose a short statement [ no more than three sentences] and B. summarizes this statements. A. agrees with this summary by nodding and then B. gives another statement about the subject and A. agrees.

A short demonstration with a participant can be fruitful.

Tell them that the observer watches the process and interferes if the exercise changes in a normal conversation without the systematic summarizing. One round with A and B with their subject lasts 4 minutes, then the group evaluates shortly, lead by the observer. Next turn B and C choose a subject they can disagree on for 4 minutes etc.

After three rounds a plenary evaluation will take place.

30 minutes: Exercise takes place in three rounds.

Trainer walks around and listens how the exercises proceed. Intervene now and then in the groups and help with good summaries of the posed statements if necessary.

10 minutes: Plenary evaluation.

Ask in the plenary the following questions:

- What is difficult about good summarizing? [ foreseen answers are  
“ Good uncoloured and objective summarizing is difficult when you have other ideas in your head or another opinion about the subject”.  
“It is difficult to listen carefully because you are already busy with what you yourself are going to state in the next moment”.
- What did you learn about yourself in summarizing?

As a trainer you can skip the remark: “It is unnatural to do all his summarizing, it is not a normal conversation” by saying that this is indeed a fact and that the purpose is not to have a good conversation but to do a exercise to learn about summarizing.

***Material:***

Information about summarizing, what is it, what criteria, etc. on sheet , power point or flipchart.

Some subjects that can be used for the discussion if groups can not find subjects themselves in a short time.

## **Summarizing is**

- **Clarifying**
- **among the most important issues**
- **giving peace [the listener understands]**
- **summing up**

## **Summarizing must be**

- **short**
- **complete**
- **uncoloured**
- **fresh words**

## **Summarizing can be**

- **on the content**
- **on the emotions or process**
- **on both**