

Spaces for Listening – an Invitation.

Through our Psychology4Improvement project, we have reaffirmed our deeply-held sense that it is our relationships which form the foundations for improvement work. Charlie Jones and Brigid Russell have developed #SpacesForListening, which is a project that has been going since May 2020. Our sense is that #SpacesForListening can be one way to bring people together, and develop a sense of personal connection, which can support improvement projects.

Anyone is welcome to experience a #SpacesForListening session.

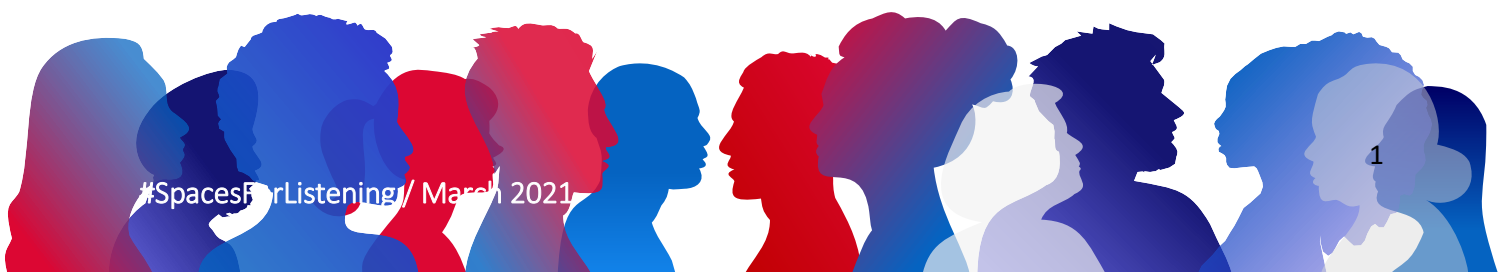
What are Spaces for Listening?

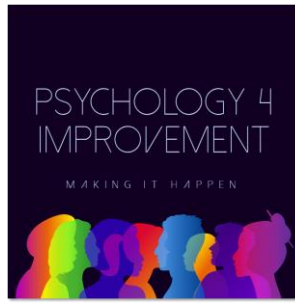
#SpacesForListening are simple, lightly structured spaces which invite a different quality of conversation. These are one-off sessions, typically with 8 people on Zoom, in which people share what we are feeling and thinking. These sessions are not about giving us the 'answer', but rather they give us breathing space: to find out and share what is going on for each of us; and, to hear where others are too.

In #SpacesForListening we each have an equal opportunity to share our thoughts and feelings, and to experience an equality of listening; there is no hierarchy. It is about starting where we are; sharing what is going on for each of us.

The structure of three rounds of timed contributions provides a safe and confidential space in which we can each choose to open up and explore our ideas and feelings. Each one of us takes a turn, in order, and in so doing, we each experience a level of listening, an equal chance to share, and a spirit of appreciation. It's always okay to pass in any particular round. The core principles of the approach are to stick to the timings and a set running order, thereby ensuring the equality of space and safety each person experiences.

Spaces for Listening are unedited. Our experience is that they enable us to go on and have conversations elsewhere which are more real, purposeful, and meaningful. It all starts with the quality of our listening, and the quality of our appreciation for each other. Better conversations lead to more effective relational working. And this, we believe, underpins our improvement work.





How are Spaces for Listening run?

We believe that the best way to understand the quality and potential of this simple, structured approach is to experience it. After the experience, if it feels useful, we can each choose to experiment further with the approach and bring it into our improvement work.

There is a structure in the form of listening rounds, held by a facilitator (who is also an equal participant). There is a prompt for each round. The facilitator lets us know whose turn it is next. Each of us has 2 minutes in turn, timed and called by the facilitator. After the first round, we stick to the same order of people in rounds 2 and 3. Each of us can use our time to say whatever we like; at 2 minutes, the facilitator indicates that time is up, and we move on to the next person.

If any of us want to pass, when it is our turn, this is completely fine; at the end of the round the facilitator will come back to any of us who have 'passed' to see if we now want to say anything. We do not interrupt each other or open up into a general conversation. We can choose, if we like, to comment on what others have said within our own allotted 2 minutes.

- In Round 1, the prompt is: How are you and what is on your mind....
- In Round 2, the invitation is to share your reflections and feelings now, and in the light of what you have heard in Round 1....
- In Round 3, the invitation is to share one thing you might like to take away, and also to offer some appreciation to any particular thoughts or any aspects of the call that have resonated with you...

At the end of Round 3, the session ends.

If you would like to find out more about #SpacesForListening, please contact Brigid Russell (brigidb@btinternet.com / @brigidrussell51) or Charlie Jones (charlie.jones@nbt.nhs.uk / @charlie_psych)

