

Dyads

Based on the work by Julian Weissglass (1990)

Constructive listening is a form of communication where people can construct understandings and deal with their feelings. A dyad is the exchange of constructivist listening between two people.

I agree to listen to and think about you for a fixed period of time in exchange for your doing the same for me. I keep in my mind that my listening is for your benefit, so I do not ask questions for my information.

Dyad Guidelines

- Each person is given equal time to talk. Everyone deserves attention.
- The listeners do not interpret, paraphrase, analyze, give advice, or break in with a personal story. People are capable of solving their own problems.
- Confidentiality is maintained. (The listener doesn't talk about what the talker has said to anyone else or bring it up to the talker afterwards.) To be authentic, a person needs to be assured of confidentiality.
- The talkers do not criticize or complain about the listeners or about mutual colleagues during their time to talk. A person cannot listen well when they are feeling attacked or defensive. Problems are to be addressed in a different structure, based in dialogue.

A Few More Things

- The time belongs to the speaker. If the speaker wants to diverge from the suggested prompt, that's okay. If the speaker wants to sit in silence, that's okay!
- Sit facing each other, knee to knee, with nothing in your hands.
- Know that many people feel uncomfortable or awkward doing dyads when they first experience them; often this dissipates.