Listen First

The Y’s Strategy to Encourage Change
Presented by Rachel Berglund

Course Objectives
- Learn about the spirit, origins and uses of Listen First
- Gain an understanding of the key concepts
- Learn and practice the core skills
- Consider ways to utilize Listen First skills to prevent diabetes
- Make a plan to practice and hone skills

Origins of Listen First
- Built on the concepts of Motivational Interviewing
- John Baer and a team from Y-USA developed LF for use in YMCAs
- LF disseminated through pilot collaboratives (Gulick Collaboratives)
- Skills and concepts applied to behavior change programs

Spirit of Listen First
- The spirit of Listen First is collaboration
- How we talk to people makes a huge difference
- LF is not about selling someone a program
YMCAs use of Listen First

- Listen First is used by Y staff in many ways
  - With coworkers
  - With members
  - With program participants and health seekers
- LF skills are utilized in YMCA programs focused on behavior change
  - YMCA Diabetes Prevention
  - LIVESTRONG at the Y
  - LIVEWISE-Marquette YMCA

Ambivalence

- Feeling two ways about something
- Common in behavior change
- Watch for communication traps!

Key Concepts

- Ambivalence
- Collaboration and Ownership
- Communicating Understanding
- The “Righting Reflex”

Collaboration and Ownership

- People need to feel respected and understood
- Especially important with ambivalent people
- People need to make their own choices
Communicating Understanding
- Foundation of collaborative relationships
- Rarely learned or modeled in our culture
- Focus on other person and not multitask
- Nonverbal cues are important

Managing the “Righting Reflex”
- Common reaction when someone is in need of help
- Assumes the person should change and this is the time for change
- Helpful in some instances but poor method to encourage habit change
- Opposite of communicating understanding

Core Skills
- Open Ended Questions
- Reflections
- Summaries
- Affirmations
- Sharing information

Open Ended Questions
- Cannot be answered with one word
- Require the respondent to elaborate
- Invite discussion
  - Personal ideas
  - Plans
  - Feelings
- Encourage us to become better listeners
Exercise: Open Ended Questions
- Sit in pairs
- Listener asks only open ended questions
- Facilitator will ring bell to switch partners after 3 minutes

Exercise Reflections
- Sit in triads
- Speaker will present issue they feel ambivalent about *Please allow the listener chances to practice questions and reflections*
- Listener will use open-ended questions and incorporate a few reflections
- Observer will provide Listener with feedback and ideas
- Facilitator will ring bell to remind to switch roles

Reflections
- Statements that express the meaning of what we heard
- Rarely used and take time to master
- Gordon’s “Hypothesis Testing Model”, remember playing telephone?
- Both subtle and powerful
- Often start with “so” or “it sounds like” or “you”

Summary
- A series of reflections
- Contain all the aspects of the issue
- End with an open ended question such as:
  - “What else?”
  - “How might this affect your decision?”
  - “What is the most important part for you?”
  - “Where would you like to go with this?”

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Exercise-Extended Listening

- Triads
- Speaker, Listener, and Observer
- Combine open-ended questions, reflections and end with a summary
- Stay with this triad

Exercise-Affirmations

- In group that you just worked with come up with an affirmation for the person you listened to
- Remember: Consider intention and effort

Affirmations

- Finding people doing something right
- Must be genuine and personal
- Consider intention and effort

Sharing Information

- Broach sensitive topics carefully
- Ask for permission to give advice
- Provide a menu of options
- Always end on good terms
Exercise: Sharing Information
- Partner up
- Listener pick a topic you are knowledgeable in to share
- Role play sharing information on this topic
- Switch so both have a chance to practice

YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program and Listen First: Stories from the field
- Overview of YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program
- LF Skills can be used one-on-one by lifestyle coaches
- LF Skills are used in the group setting
  - Participants' help each other
  - Facilitators encourage ideas without assigning judgment

Group Brainstorm
- What did you learn?
- How can you use it?
- What barriers do you anticipate?
- Practice is important; how will you practice?
  - Journals
  - Practice with family and friends

Review Course Objectives
- The spirit of Listen First, its origins and uses
- Key Concepts in Listen First-Building Collaboration, Working Thought Ambivalence, Communicating Understanding and Managing the “Righting Reflex”
- Core Skills and practice-Open Ended Questions, Reflections, Summaries, Affirmations and Sharing Information
Questions or Comments?

Thank you very much for your time and attention!