

Key Skills Checklist



This checklist is a reflection tool developed by Christian van Nieuwerburgh, Chris Munro and Claudia Owad. It describes **five key skills** of an effective **conversation leader**.

1. Listening to encourage thinking

- I listen at least twice as much as I speak
- I refrain from interrupting
- I wait until someone has completely finished speaking before sharing my thoughts
- I avoid completing people's sentences
- I maintain appropriate eye contact and open body language in conversations
- I use encouraging nods and minimal prompts to let others know I am listening
- I can comfortably manage silence in a conversation without trying to fill it

2. Asking powerful questions

- o I ask open ended questions that invite deeper thinking
- o I ask only one question at a time, allowing people time to reflect and answer
- o I avoid giving advice through leading questions such as 'have you tried'...
- o I begin my questions with open starters e.g. "how", "what", "where" and "who"
- o I ask questions that demonstrate curiosity
- o I ask thought-provoking questions
- o I ask questions that seek commitment
- o I ask solution focused questions that focus on desired results

3. Summarising and paraphrasing

- o I summarise what I hear into fewer words
- o I refocus the attention of the conversation through summarising and paraphrasing
- o I use summarising to reframe the other person's perception of a situation
- o I use paraphrasing to reflect back what the other person has said
- o I include some of the other person's language when summarising
- o I use paraphrasing and summarising to confirm that there is shared understanding

I do this poorly	I do this well

4. Noticing

- o I am aware of my own body language and the body language of the other person
- o I am aware of my own emotions and the emotions of the other person
- o I notice how others are reacting through verbal and non-verbal cues
- o I notice my own energy levels and that of others in a conversation
- o I notice my own tendency to be either directive or non-directive
- o I notice signals and words that provide information about a person's readiness
- o I notice the environment around me when I have conversations

5. Sharing Knowledge and Perspective

- o I am careful to discern the usefulness of any contribution I might make before speaking
- o I am cautious and intentional about what, when and how I contribute
- o I ask permission before offering my perspective or suggestions
- o When sharing my knowledge or perspective, I use provisional language
- o I invite the other person to consider and contextualise my suggestions or perspective
- o I seek to allow my conversation partner choice



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