

THE VOICE

JRH Support Staff Newsletter



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Becoming a Better Listener

When someone is in distress, it's only natural for us to want to help them feel better. We often think the best way for us to do this is to try and solve all their problems for them by offering advice and solutions, or we try to say things to make them 'cheer up' or feel better about the situation.

Although these responses are well-meaning, they are rarely very effective, especially when someone is in real distress and feeling desperate. It is usually far more effective in these situations to step back a little and simply support the person to talk about their feelings by actively listening to them.

Active listening is a skill that involves you paying full attention to the person talking so you can focus on their thoughts, needs, feelings and ideas. Active listening is not always easy, as it requires effort to really focus and concentrate on what someone is saying to you without interrupting them or offering advice.

Remember - really listening to people makes them feel valued and understood, and offers them the opportunity to explore and express their feelings.

Here are a few tips on how to become a better listener:

Show you care

Focus on the other person; give them your full attention; stay present and if you feel the perfectly naturally urge to interrupt or talk – try to replace it with a listening sign such as nodding your head or saying just a short word to encourage the other person to keep talking – e.g. “go on” “tell me more about that.”



Have patience

It may take time and several attempts before a person is ready to open up. Time is key. The person sharing shouldn't feel rushed, or they won't feel it's a safe environment. If the other person has paused, wait. They may not have finished speaking.

Remember that it might take them some time to think through what they want to say or they may find it difficult to express exactly how they are feeling in words

Use open questions

Use questions that need more than a yes/no answer, and follow up with things such as "Tell me more" or "How did that affect you?"

These questions are objective and require a person to pause, think, reflect and then hopefully expand. Be cautious of questions that start with WHY – e.g. "Why did you do that?" or "Why didn't you speak to someone?" as they can come across as critical or judgemental.

Say it back

Saying it back can help you check you've understood what someone has said, and show the other person you're listening and WANT to understand. Repeating something back to somebody (in their words not your own) is a good way to reassure them that they have your undivided attention. You can check to see that you're hearing what they want you to hear, not putting your own interpretation on the conversation – e.g. "You said that you're finding it hard to manage your job, childcare and support your mum" rather than "You said you're struggling to cope with multiple priorities."

Have courage

Don't be put off by an initial negative response and don't feel you have to fill a silence in a conversation. Show you're willing to listen – sometimes just kindness and patience are exactly what somebody needs to be able to share what is going on for them.

“Good listeners, like precious gems, are to be treasured.”

— Walter Anderson

AMBER'S MEME OF THE MONTH

meme

noun

- an image, video, piece of text etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variations..



MOTM

MANAGING ANXIETY AT WORK

SIGNS OF ANXIETY

It is normal to be worried and stressed during times of crisis. While worry is a part of anxiety, people with anxiety tend to experience more exaggerated feelings of worry and tension. Some common symptoms include:



Uncontrollable worry or dread



Stomach and digestion problems



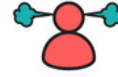
Trouble with concentration, memory, or thinking clearly



Increased heart rate



Changes in energy and difficulty sleeping



Irritability and/or restlessness

In extreme cases of anxiety, people may experience a panic attack. Panic attacks are often mistaken for heart attacks at first, but usually go away when people are able to talk to someone else to calm their fears and practice deep breathing.

While work can provide a sense of structure and routine that helps some people manage their anxieties, others may find that work-related factors such as an excessive workload, long working hours, and the pressure to perform may contribute to feelings of anxiety instead.

When we feel anxious at work, it can significantly impact our job performance. For instance, we might start making uncharacteristic mistakes, miss important deadlines, or find it difficult to make decisions. Left unchecked, this could have an impact on our general wellbeing, however, there are ways to manage our anxiety while at work. To do this, we can try the following:

Taking a Breather

Taking a few calm and deep breaths throughout the day can help us to reduce anxiety by bringing our attention back to the present moment and calming the mind. Try breathing in for four, holding for four, and then releasing for four.

Challenging Our Thinking

We are often our own worst critics. By thinking more about what we 'say' to ourselves and reframing these thoughts, we can reduce feelings of anxiety by building our resilience and capacity to view situations in a more realistic and rational way. Try asking yourself:

"Will this still matter in a year's time?"

"What is it that I *can* currently control?"

"How else can I perceive the situation?"

Setting Ourselves 'Worry Time'

'Worry time' begins by setting aside 20-30 minutes each day for problem-solving. Each time we notice our mind worrying, we can tell ourselves that we will come back to this at 'worry time'.

This way, when worries come into our head throughout the day, we can plan to think about them later, allowing us to refocus our minds on the present moment. Jotting down our worries to think about later can also help us to identify possible patterns and triggers.

Distracting Ourselves

Distracting ourselves for at least three minutes can help us to reduce physical symptoms of anxiety. Try studying the things around you, doodling a picture, or counting backwards from 100.

Ellie's Random Facts

OF THE MONTH

1. When you scan a QR code, your camera scans the white spaces not the black dots.
2. A cat's tail contains nearly 10 percent of the bones in its body.
3. The highest wave ever surfed was as tall as a 10-story building.

I SAID IT'S
A FACT!



More next month!

FAITH & CULTURE GUIDANCE



A person's religion and culture is central to their very being, and will have a direct effect on their needs, their behaviour and often on their attitude towards care and support.

Because of this it's important that we have a good understanding of different religions and cultures so we can support people of all different faiths. The staff section of the JRH website has comprehensive guidance on a large number of different faiths, but we will use the JRH Newsletters to focus on some of the more well known ones.

RASTAFARIANISM

Background

The Rastafarian religion developed in Jamaica as an expression of the African identity of black people in the West Indies. It is based on the ideas of Marcus Garvey, a black Jamaican who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the 1920s. It sought to restore the dignity of black people lost through many years of domination and colonisation by Europeans.

UK Community

There are approximately one million worldwide adherents of Rastafari as a faith. The 2001 census found 5,000 Rastafarians living in England and Wales. Followers of Rastafari are known by a variety of names: Rastafarians, Rastas, Sufferers, Locksmen, Dreads or Dreadlocks.

Beliefs

Rastafarianism is based on the Christian faith, but

it rejects the European image of God as white, believing that it is equally valid for black people to believe in a black God. Rastafarians believe that the bible provides evidence that the Israelites were black, and that Rasta's now living in exile in Jamaica are their descendants. Rastafarians share the moral values of Christianity but they also believe strongly in the power of nature. They believe the human race should live in harmony with nature and that the destruction of the environment by the developed nations is wrong.

Places of Worship

Rastafarians don't have a specific religious building that is set aside for worship. Rastafarians usually meet weekly, either in a believer's home or in a community centre. The meetings are referred to as Reasoning sessions. They provide a time for chants, prayers and singing, and for communal issues to be discussed.

Haile Selassie

Haile Selassie was the Emperor of Ethiopia between 1930 and 1974 and remains the central figure in Rastafari ideology. Rastafarians regard Haile Selassie as the God of the black race because Marcus Garvey's prophecy - "Look to Africa where a black king shall be crowned, he shall be the redeemer" - was swiftly followed by the ascension of Haile Selassie as Emperor of Ethiopia.

Religious festivals

For the major celebrations, people come together to chant, recite psalms, sing hymns and pray. Drumming is a fundamental element of worship. There is also discussion and debate.

The major festivals are:

- Birth of Tafari Makonnen (Haile Selassie) - 23rd July
- Birth of Marcus Garvey - 17th August
- Ethiopian New Year - 11th September
- Coronation Day - 2nd November
- Ethiopian Orthodox Christmas - 7th January
- Battle of Adawa anniversary - 16th March
- African Liberation Day - 25th May

Diet

A preference for natural foods is to be expected from Rastafarian beliefs, and although there are no formal dietary restrictions, a vegetarian diet is preferable to meat.

Rastafarians will not eat pork, or foods containing pork or its by-products. Many Rastafarians do not believe in drinking alcohol but may use marijuana (or 'ganja'). This is controversial in some parts of Britain. For the Rastafarians the practice is believed to assist prayer and meditation and to have medicinal properties.

When entering a home

There are no particular rules to observe. The colours red, gold, green and black have special significance. Red symbolises the blood of the race shed in the past, gold symbolises sunshine, green the promise of a new life in Africa, while black symbolises pride in the black skin.

The name of the ancient city of Babylon has been adopted by Rastafarians to embody the whole concept of white domination and conditioning, which presents black people as inferior. It has become a sort of code-word, particularly for young black people, who use it to symbolise the racial prejudice and social injustice which they experience in Britain.

Healthcare

Some Rastafarians do not accept blood transfusions. Rastafarian women may prefer to be seen by a female healthcare worker, but it is not a problem if this isn't possible.

Death

In Rastafari there is no funeral ceremony to mark the end of life. Rastafarians believe that reincarnation follows death, and that life is eternal.

Social aspects

Traditionally, the father is the head of the household, but Rasta's are increasingly acknowledging the important role of women and want to ensure equality between men and women.



Bob Marley and Rastafarianism

Bob Marley was a member for some years of the Rastafari movement, whose culture was a key element in the development of reggae. He became an ardent proponent of Rastafari, taking its music out of the socially deprived areas of Jamaica and onto the international music scene.

WE'LL GIVE YOU

£100

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

IF YOU REFER A FRIEND TO WORK AT JRH

If you refer someone to apply for a job at JRH and they are recruited, we'll give you £100 when the person successfully completes their probation period!

Just ask them to put your name in the relevant part of the application form.

