

# The Step-by-Step Guide to Listening Sessions

## Opening (5-10 minutes)

**Informal conversation, greetings, logistics, and settling in. No structured turns.**

Suggested questions for both people to ask themselves and share their thoughts about:

1. How am I right now? What about in general?
2. What are my intentions (if any) for how I will use my turn to be heard?
3. Is there anything I need to say to fully relax into our time together? (With a new partner, this can include sharing personal quirks, preferences, and boundaries such as: “I don’t like rats.” Or “I like to hear optimistic thoughts interspersed with descriptions of challenges.” Or “I don’t like hearing about WWII. Can it be out of bounds for our sessions?”)

Decide together who will go first or flip a coin.

## Before The First Turn Begins (2-5 minutes)

**The one who is about to have their turn shares:**

1. How do I want time tracked?
2. Would I appreciate having a few notes written down?
3. Which listening style and type of response do I want?

**\*\*The listener verifies that they understand what their partner wants.\*\***

Reserve 5-10 minutes for closing and divide the rest of the time in half. Start a timer.

## The First Turn (15-25 minutes)

It is totally fine to ask for adjustments to the listening style and type of response you want.

Suggestions for how to ask for adjustments:

“I am finding that \_\_\_\_\_ is all I need at the moment.”

“I may want something more later, but for now \_\_\_\_\_ is best.”

**If you want your partner’s perspective, reserve time to hear it during your turn.**

## Transition After The First Turn (1-5 minutes)

The first person shares gratitude and takeaways about their experience of their turn.

Then, they start the transition to their partner’s turn by asking the same three questions (found in the ‘Before The First Turn Begins’ section) that they answered before their turn.

**\*\*The listener verifies that they understand what their partner wants.\*\***

**Second Turn (15-25 minutes) - Switch roles. Everything else is the same.**

## Transition to Closing (1-5 minutes)

The second person shares gratitude and takeaways about their experience of their turn and begins the closing.

## Closing (1-5 minutes)

Share with each other in an informal way:

1. How am I now?
2. What are my takeaways from the whole experience of this session?

If you schedule sessions with this partner, confirm your next meeting. If you want to begin scheduling sessions, or introduce them to someone new, this is the time to propose that.

Informal farewells.