



## LISTENING CAREFULLY

**Knack** is on the couch and notices **Specs** under a rainy, black cloud looking very upset. **Knack** shows interest in hearing how **Specs** is doing. **Specs** slowly opens up and tells **Knack** about the problem. **Knack** shows concern and support by being attentive, and listening carefully. **Specs** seems to feel better after talking with **Knack** and coming up with ideas about how to handle things.

### MESSAGE

How valuable it is to listen carefully to our children, to be observant and attuned to their feelings, making sure they know we are there for them.

It is also important to allow them space and time to generate their own ideas.

#### Narrated Message

*Listen, listen, listen.*

*This is the advice we have received again and again from young people.*

*We can change things for the better – not by taking charge – but by listening carefully, and nurturing caring relationships with young people who feel vulnerable.*

### ISSUES

- Communicating clearly to our children that we are there for them
- Finding time in our busy lives to check in with our children and find out how they are
- Learning how to really listen and be present
- Giving children time and space to move at their own pace and share their stories
- Helping children develop problem-solving skills, rather than rushing to do the thinking for them

### STRATEGIES

- Taking notice of when our children seem worried or sad
- Finding a quiet, private space to talk
- Listening carefully when children speak and tell us their problems
- Allowing space for children to come up with strategies and solutions

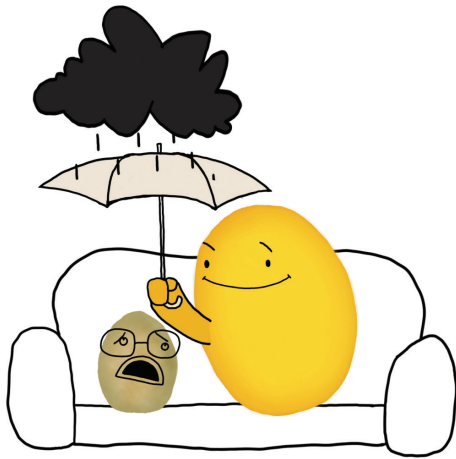
## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

### Parents

1. What are some of the messages this vignette offers?
2. What might indicate that your child is struggling with a problem?
3. Why is it important to listen to children talk about their experiences?
4. How would you describe listening actively? What are the main aspects?
5. Are there challenges to practising this form of listening?
6. What kinds of questions encourage children to come up with ways to reflect on and handle the situation?

### School Staff

1. What are some of the messages this vignette offers?
2. What might encourage students to share concerns they have? Are there barriers that might make it difficult?
3. How would you describe listening actively? Are there challenges to putting it into practice as an educator?
4. What can we offer parents to help them when talking with their children? What kinds of supports might staff need?



## RESOURCES

- Positive Ways to Talk and Listen  
[www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/strategies.html](http://www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/strategies.html)
- How Can Parents Model Good Listening Skills?  
[www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/how\\_can\\_parents\\_model.html](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/how_can_parents_model.html)
- Communicating with Children  
[http://www.unicef.org/cwc/files/CwC\\_Web\(2\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/cwc/files/CwC_Web(2).pdf)
- Positive Discipline Training manual Part 5: Active Listening  
[www.plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear/resources/publications/positive-discipline-training-manual](http://www.plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear/resources/publications/positive-discipline-training-manual)
- Communicating with Children  
[www.brightfutures.org/mentalhealth/pdf/tools.html#families](http://www.brightfutures.org/mentalhealth/pdf/tools.html#families)
- Parenting - Communicating with Children  
[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Parenting\\_communicating\\_with\\_children](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Parenting_communicating_with_children)
- Parenting - Communicating with Teenagers  
[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Parenting\\_communicating\\_with\\_teenagers](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Parenting_communicating_with_teenagers)
- Bullies and Victims: A Primer for Parents  
[www.nasponline.org/resources/bullying/Bullying\\_Primer.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/bullying/Bullying_Primer.pdf)

## SCHOOL STAFF

- Safe@school: Active Listening  
[www.safeatschool.ca/index.php?q=plm/bullying-prevention/healthy-communication/active-listening](http://www.safeatschool.ca/index.php?q=plm/bullying-prevention/healthy-communication/active-listening)
- Bullying Response  
[www.respectme.org.uk/Response.html](http://www.respectme.org.uk/Response.html)