**My health and wellbeing in prison and beyond (men) Part 2**

**Unit 2**

**Mental health**



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**Unit 2 Mental health: teacher’s notes**

This unit focuses on mental wellbeing in prison and considers support available to offenders. As an example, the unit looks specifically at the role of Listeners in prison. The materials are based on a video produced specifically for the Offender Learning Project with an actor playing the part of a prison Listener. Activities using the video aim to help learners develop strategies for listening. The unit also aims to provide opportunities for learners to access support for good mental health and finally to read and discuss a poem written by a prisoner about how a Listener helped him.

**Time**: 90 minutes

**Aims**

* To develop listening skills
* To introduce lexis associated with mental health
* To provide an opportunity for learners to talk about mental health in prison

**Objectives**

All learners will be able to:

* Listen to and order the main points of an interview with a prison Listener
* Listen for gist and understand the main points of the interview
* Listen for detail to isolate key words mentioned in context and understand their meaning
* Learn some vocabulary connected with mental health and feelings

*Entry 1 learners will be able to:*

* Read a poem about a Listener and answer at least one question about it

*Entry 2 learners will be able to:*

* Discuss the role of a Listener in prison

*Entry 3 learners will be able to:*

* Make brief notes while listening to the interview
* Read a poem about a Listener and answer four or more questions about it

**Preparation**

**You will need:**

* **Resource 1a/b** – one copy per learner according to their level (Entry 1–2 / Entry 3)
* **Resource 2** – cut into three copies (cut on the dotted line), one slip per learner
* **Resource 3a/b** – one copy per learner according to their level (Entry 1-2 / Entry 3)
* **Resource 4a/b** – one copy per learner
* **Resource 5a/b** – one copy per learner according to their level (Entry 1-2 / Entry 3)
* **Resource 6** – one copy per learner
* The Listener video (‘Being a Listener inside prison’)

**Suggested Procedure**

**Warmer: Getting support in prison -** **who can you talk to? (5 minutes)**

* Write these words on the board: sad, depressed, angry, stressed. Check learners understand them, by miming, using facial expressions or sketches on the board.
* Elicit from the learners: who feels these emotions - people inside or outside prison? It is likely that anyone can experience these feelings, wherever they are.
* Ask learners: when you feel bad in prison, who can you go to for help? Who did you talk to outside prison?

*Possible answers:*

*Inside prison – the health care department, Samaritans, Listeners, a neighbour, self-help guides*

*Outside prison – family (mum, dad, partner, sibling), best friend, doctor, counsellor*

* Check learners’ understanding of the term ‘mental health’ or health of the mind. You could contrast it with ‘physical health’ or health of the body. Tell learners that they are going to watch a video about a Listener in prison and discuss how to have good mental health.

**Differentiation**: for stronger learners, you could show them the list of six states of mental health to provide a few extra words for learners to learn. The six states are:

anger - depression - stress - anxiety - calm - controlled

**Activity 1: Pre-listening - predicting topics** (**15** **minutes)**

* Put learners in small groups and ask them to predict what the Listener is going to talk about.
* Hand out them a copy of **resource 1**. The resource lists the nine topics covered in the video. Ask learners if they had predicted any the topics.
* Read out each one and ask each group to hold up the corresponding topic.
* Play the video all the way through and ask the learners to listen for the order of the topics. Allow time for them to check their answers in their groups.
* Elicit the correct order or you could play the video again pausing it at the question slides to help all learners check their answers.

**Differentiation**: For lower-level learners, give them **resource 1a** with five topics instead of nine. Give **resource 1b** to stronger learners.

**Activity 2: True or false (10 )**

* Give out **resource 2** which contains six true or false statements about the video. Elicit the meaning of ‘nosy’ (being too interested in other people’s lives).
* In pairs, let the learners read the statements and decide whether they are true or false.
* Play the first three minutes of the video for learners to check their questions.
* Ask learners to check their answers in pairs before doing so as a class.

**Differentiation**: Ask lower-level learners to determine whether the statements are true or false and higher-level learners to give the correct answer in detail.

**Activity 3a Vocabulary in context (15 minutes)**

* Hand out **resource 3a** and **b** according to each learner’s ability level.
* For both resources, read through the words with the group and drill pronunciation.
* Give learners some time to review the words.
* You could play the whole video for learners to match the words (learners at lower levels) or make notes of what the words mean (higher level). You could also provide learners with dictionaries to help them look for the words.
* In whole class feedback, elicit descriptions of the vocabulary items and help as necessary. To provide further support for all learners, you could pause the video after the item is used to help learners hear John’s use of the words in context.

**Differentiation**: You could help learners at lower levels to use a dictionary or ask stronger learners to support them.

**Activity 3b Consolidation of new words - ‘back to the board’**

* Have a learner sit in front of the whiteboard with his back to the board so he can’t see it.
* Write one of the vocabulary items on the board and ask the other learners to describe the word without saying what the word is. The purpose is for the learner sitting in front of the board to try to say the word being described.
* Nominate learners to describe the words and give different learners a chance to guess choosing words appropriate to the guesser’s ability level.

**Differentiation**: If the words are too challenging for some learners, you could use other words for them to guess when playing ‘back to the board’. These could include, ‘Listener’, ‘interview’ or ‘Samaritans’.

**Activity 4: Grammar (10 minutes)**

* Hand out **resource 4**. There are two versions of the resource (4a for lower-level and 4b for higher-level learners).
* Direct learners to the conversation extract on the resource and ask them to write the verbs into the text in the correct form.
* Play the video for learners to listen and check the verbs they have used. Play the video from 2:18 – 3:15 only.

**Differentiation**: Use the two versions of the resource to make the task more achievable for learners at lower levels. Ask more proficient learners to look at the verbs in the box and think of the past forms.

**Activity 5: Talking about your problems (15 minutes)**

* Before you play the video from 3:17 – 4:25, hand out a copy of **resource 5** and look through the task with the learners. Help learners to understand the vocabulary. Drill pronunciation.
* Play the video from 3:17 to 4:25.
* Elicit the types of problems John mentions. Check everyone understands the vocabulary.

**Extension: Discussion**

* To personalise the information, you could ask learners a few follow-up questions and elicit their comments. For example:
  + *If you want to speak to a Listener in prison, what do you need to do?*
  + *Do you think John is a good Listener? Would you talk to him? Why / why not?*

**Differentiation**: there are two versions of resource 5, one lists possible problems for the learners to tick (5a); the other asks learners to make notes of the problems mentioned (5b).

**Activity 6: Reading and discussion of a poem - *The Listener* (15 minutes)**

* Elicit what a poem is. You could give a simple example of a poem such as ‘Roses are red’ or refer to the lyrics of a song that your learners will know. Ask about poetry in learners’ first languages.
* Hand out a copy of a real prisoner’s poem called ‘The Listener’.
* Write these questions on the board:
  + *Where is he? (lines 1 – 14)*
  + *How does he feel? (lines 1 – 9)*
  + *Who does he meet? (lines 10 – 14)*
  + *How is he feeling about tomorrow? Why? (lines 20 -24)*
* Read the poem to the learners straight through with expression and at a natural pace. Ask learners just to listen. Check learners understand what it is about – ask gist questions :

*Who wrote this poem? What is it about?*

* Read it again, pausing at the end of each verse to check understanding e.g. ask

*Is it morning, afternoon, evening? What is he thinking? What is he feeling?*

* Arrange the learners in to four groups. Give one of the four questions to each group and refer to the line numbers where they can find the answer.
* Maximise the opportunity for discussion by inviting each group to report back to the whole class in feedback.

**Differentiation**: If the majority of the learners are not sufficiently literate in English, this poem may be too difficult at this stage. Save it for a follow-up lesson where you could work on the vocabulary and language features orally before using it to develop reading skills.

**Extension: discussion**

There is a lot to explore in the poem. You could read it aloud again so learners can hear the rhyme within it. Here are some additional questions you could use either as a follow-up discussion or as an extension task for stronger learners.

* *What difficult things does he mention in the poem? (lines 3 – 5)*
* *How did the Listener help? (lines 12 – 19)*
* *What is he doing to be positive? (lines 20 – 28)*

**Cooler: Tips for good mental health (5 minutes)**

* Write on the board, ‘Tips for good mental health’.
* Ask learners to comment on how they think you can keep positive in prison.
* Add the following to learners’ ideas if they haven’t mentioned them yet: ‘exercise’, ‘sleep’ and ‘diet’. Invite comments on how these things can help you feel good.

Possible tips:

be active do exercise

get enough sleep relax

eat well have a good diet

talk to someone when you feel down

**Differentiation:** You could also elicit the suggestions mentioned in the poem. These include: ‘get out the cell’, ‘have a bit of fun’, ‘try to get a job’, and, ‘if you struggle and can't cope, go and see [a Listener]’.

**Follow-up activities or Extension activities**

**A visit from a Listener**

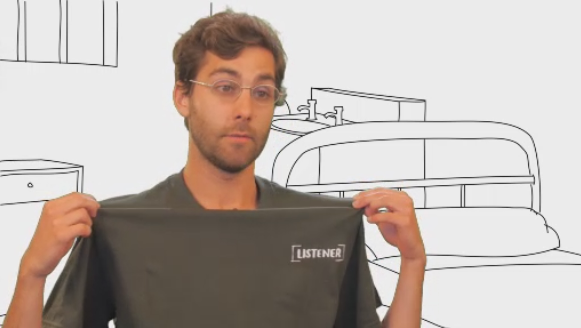
* Arrange for a Listener in your institution to visit the class. Learners could prepare some questions to ask him or even ask the Listener questions from the video. This would be an excellent way for learners to meet a Listener if they haven’t already.
* The Samaritans have produced DVDs for their Listener scheme in prisons. These were filmed in prisons and include prisoners (male or female on separate videos) talking about their experience. Ask the scheme coordinator in your prison to visit your class and show the DVD. Work with your class to decide on questions to ask the visitor and design further speaking and listening activities based on the video.

**Getting support**

* Collect some information from the healthcare department about the mental health support that is offered in your institution. Reading activities could be developed to help learners understand the content of the information.
* Alternatively, you could take the class on a visit to healthcare to find some information themselves. As above, work with the learners to prepare questions for the visit. Role-play a question and answer session using the materials you collected and read as a class.

**Unit 2 Mental health: learner resources**

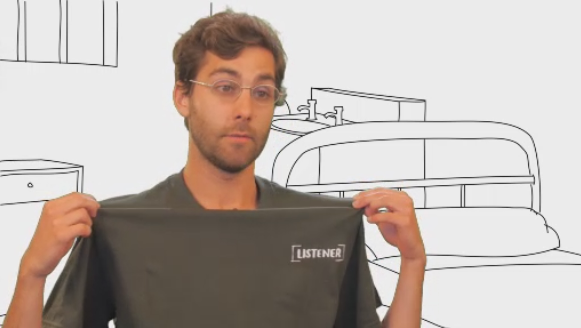
**Resource 1a** (fewer topics)

**Listening to the main points**

Listen to the video of a prison Listener and order the topics as you hear them, from 1 to 5.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Training |
|  | type of problems people talk about |
| 1 | T-shirt |
|  | find out about being a Listener |
|  | apply to be a Listener |

**Unit 2 Mental health: learner resources**



**Resource 1b**

**Listening to the main points**

Listen to the video of a prison Listener and order the topics as you hear them, from 1 to 9.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | How does it help people to go to speak to a Listener? |
|  | Did you have any training? |
|  | What type of problems can people talk to you about? |
|  | Why did you want to become a Listener? |
| 1 | Can you tell us about your T-shirt? |
|  | Have you changed since you became a Listener? |
|  | How did you find out about being a Listener? |
|  | How did you apply to be a Listener? |
|  | What type of problems do people from other countries talk about? |

**Resource 2**

**Understanding the film (0:00 – 3:15)**

Are these sentences true or false? Correct any false statements.

1. John wears a yellow T-shirt in his prison.
2. He’s been a Listener for three years.
3. He found out about being a Listener from a neighbour.
4. John wanted to become a Listener because he’s nosy about their problems.
5. He had to have an interview to be a Listener.
6. His training lasted four days.

✄

**Resource 2**

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**Resource 3a**

**Understanding vocabulary in context**

Read the words and think what they mean. Match the words on the left with the expressions on the right.

Watch the video to help you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| word | description |
| 1. a notice (n.) | 1. acting out conversations |
| 1. qualities (n.) | 1. a poster |
| 1. to judge (v.) | 1. feeling like they want to end their lives |
| 1. confidential (adj.) | 1. what you are like |
| 1. role-play (n.) | 1. the way I speak and listen |
| 1. suicidal (adj.) | 1. feeling down because someone has died |
| 1. to grieve (v.) | 1. secret |
| 1. communication skills (n.) | 1. to tell someone if something is good or bad |

**Resource 3b Understanding vocabulary in context**



Read the words and think what they mean. Watch the video and make notes of how John describes the words.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| word | description |
| 1. a notice (n.) | a poster |
| 1. qualities (n.) |  |
| 1. to judge (v.) |  |
| 1. confidential (adj.) |  |
| 1. role-play (n.) |  |
| 1. suicidal (adj.) |  |
| 1. to grieve (v.) |  |
| 1. communications skills (n.) |  |

**Resource 4a Listening: becoming a Listener (2:18 – 3:15)**

Look at the words in the box below.

did filled out sent practised had train lasted

John uses these words in his interview. Look at what John said and put the verbs into the text.

1. Firstly, I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ an application form.
2. And then \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that to the Safer Custody Department.
3. And then I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a face-to-face interview with the Samaritans.
4. The Samaritans come in and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us.
5. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lots of role-play.
6. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ how to *really* listen.
7. And I think the training \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ four weeks.

Listen and check.

**Resource 4b Listening: becoming a Listener (2:18 – 3:15)**

Look at the words in the box below. Do you know the past tense form of each verb?

fill out send (x2) do (x2) practise have train last

John uses these words in his interview. Look at part of the interview and put the verbs into the text in the correct form.

**Interviewer**: How (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you apply to be a Listener?

**John**: Firstly, I (2)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ an application form and then (3)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that to the Safer Custody Department and they (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that to Security. And then I (5) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a face-to-face interview with the Samaritans. That was really good. I did well at that.

**Interviewer**: Did you have any training?

**John**: Yes. It was excellent! The Samaritans come in and (6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us. We (7) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lots of role-play (that’s when you act out the sort of problems people might talk to you about. We (8) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ how to *really* listen. We watched films about the sort of work the Samaritans do. We had lots of classes. And I think the training (9) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ four weeks.

Listen and check.

**Listening: understanding**

What did John do to apply to be a Listener?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What training did John have?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Resource 5a**

**Listening: talking about your problems (3:17 – 4:25)**

What are some of the problems people need to talk to a Listener about?

John says that people talk to him about many different things. Watch the video and tick the things he mentions.



❑ anger

❑ feeling frightened

❑ drugs

❑ feeling bad

❑ tiredness

❑ depression/loneliness

❑ grief



❑ feeling suicidal

❑ stress

❑ health problems





Resource 5b

**Listening: talking about your problems (3:17 – 4:25)**

What are some of the problems people need to talk to a Listener about?

Listen to John and make notes of the different problems people talk to him about.

Notes

# Resource 6: Reading and discussion – *The Listener*

# The Listener by P Coombes (HMP Bure)\*

1 Another day begins, imagining that I woke somewhere else  
2 The shadows of the bars on the floor  
3 This day will be the same as the one before

4 Thoughts of family and friends that mean so much  
5 Unable to visit as they have moved me so far away  
6 Curled up in bed, how do I get through this day?

7 Thoughts grow deep, as a tear appears  
8 Followed by another, chest grows tight  
9 Which brings a dull pain, can I do all this again

10 The door unlocks, time for association  
11 Officer says 'you ok mate?' – 'Yeah good thanks guv'  
12 Off he goes, in no time there's a knock on the door  
13 'Come in' – 'Hi my names Bob', he says in a whisper  
14 'Can we have a chat, as I'm the wing's Listener'

15 We chat about prison, family and things to do  
16 Come on I will show you, a quick tour, so much to see  
17 And all these things are here for me  
18 Come meet the lads playing pool  
19 Shook their hands and met them all

20 Now looking forward to the next day  
21 Get inducted and sign up for work  
22 Have a chat with my new mates  
23 With so many stories to share  
24 And all because someone called Bob made me aware

25 You are not alone, we are all in the same boat  
26 'Oops prison I mean', get out the cell and be seen  
27 Have a bit of fun, try to get a job  
28 If you struggle and can't cope, go and see Bob

\*This poem was first published in ***Inside Time – the National Newspaper for Prisoners***.

It was written by P Coombes (HMP Bure).

**Unit 1 Mental health: answers and transcript**

**Resource 1a**

1 – T-shirt

2 – find out about being a Listener

3 – apply to be a Listener

4 – training

5 – type of problems people talk about

**Resource 1b**

1 – Can you tell us about your T-shirt?

2 – How did you find out about being a Listener?

3 – Why did you want to become a Listener?

4 – How did you apply to be a Listener?

5 – Did you have any training?

6 – What type of problems can people talk to you about?

7 – What type of problems do people from other countries talk about?

8 – Have you changed since you became a Listener?

9 – How does it help people to go to speak to a Listener?

**Resource 2**

1 - false, 2 – true, 3 – false, 4 – true, 5 - false

**Resource 3a and 3b**

1b, 2d, 3h, 4g, 5a, 6c, 7f, 8e

**Resource 4a**

1 – filled out, 2 – sent, 3 – had, 4 – train, 5 – did, 6 – practised, 7 – lasted

**Resource 4b**

1 – did, 2 – filled out, 3 – sent, 4 – sent, 5 – had, 6 – train, 7 – did, 8 – practised, 9 – lasted

**Resource 5a and 5b**

☑ feeling frightened

☑ drugs

☑ feeling bad

☑ depression/loneliness

☑ grief

☑ feeling suicidal

☑ stress

**Questions about *The Listener* poem in Activity 6**

Where is he? (lines 1 – 14)

*He is in his cell, curled up in bed.*

How does he feel? (lines 1 – 9)

*He is thinking about his family; he feels that every day is the same; he is crying; he has a pain in his chest*

Who does he meet? (lines 10 – 14)

*He meets Bob – the wing’s Listener*

How is he feeling about tomorrow? Why? (lines 20 -24)

*He is looking forward to it and feeling more positive than he was.*

**Extension questions about *The Listener* poem in Activity 6**

What difficult things does he mention in the poem? (lines 3 – 5)

*He misses his family and is not close enough to see them. Every day feels the same.*

How did the Listener help? (lines 12 – 19)

*He chats to him, and they talk about prison, family and things to do. He shows him round the prison and he meets other prisoners. Some of them are playing pool.*

What is he doing to be positive? (lines 20 – 28)

*He is going to sign up for work, chat with his new friends and try to have some fun.*

**Video transcript**

Being a ‘Listener’

**Interviewer:** Hello John. Thank you for talking to us today about being a Listener inside prison. You’ve been a Listener for three years. Can you tell us – how did you *find out* about being a Listener?

**John:** There are different ways to find out. Sometimes they put up notices, you know, posters, on the wings – asking for Listeners. I heard about it from a neighbour on my wing. *He’s* a Listener and talked to me about it. I thought it sounded like a good thing and I wanted to do it.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell us more about why you wanted to become a Listener?

**John:** He told me that you need to have special qualities to be a Listener. That’s what’s inside you – what you are like. You never know what people will talk to you about, so you need to sit and listen and don’t judge them. My opinion is not important – I’m just *there* to *listen*, not to say if something is good or bad. We don’t tell people what to do – we just listen. The men know that they can talk to me and they trust me. And it’s important they know that I won’t tell anyone what I hear – it’s all confidential – completely secret. If I’m a Listener, I don’t tell anyone what I hear. I don’t tell prison officers – no-one.

I wanted to become a Listener because I know what it’s like to feel sad in prison and I wanted to help other men who might be feeling like that.

**Interviewer:** Yes, that’s important that the men know it is confidential and no-one else will know about the conversation.

Can you tell us *how* you apply to be a Listener?

**John:** First I completed an application form. I sent the form to the Safer Custody Department and they gave it to Security. Then I had a face to face interview with the Samaritans. I did well in that!

**Interviewer:** Did you have any training?

**John:** Yes, it was excellent. The Samaritans come in and train us. We did role plays – like acting the things people say when they talk about their problems. And we practised how to *really* listen. We also watched some films about how the Samaritans work. We also went to some classes. All the training was about four weeks.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell us about the types of problems people talk about with you?

**John:** Oh every problem! Some prisoners talk about problems they have with drugs. The men also come and talk when they are feeling bad. Feeling *suicidal* – like they want to kill themselves. Or feeling *frightened*. Lots of men feel very *depressed* in here and *lonely*. And you get people coming when they are grieving – you know when someone has died. It’s very difficult for them.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell us about the type of problems people from other countries talk about?

**John:** Lots of them are very stressed. They are scared of being deported and leaving their families behind. Some are waiting to go, but there are delays. For others, their families are a long way from here – that is a kind of grieving too.

**Interviewer:** Have you changed since you became a Listener?

**John:** My communication skills – how I speak and listen - have improved a lot. I find it really easy now to listen to people and really hear what they say and not judge them.

**Interviewer:** How do you think it helps people to go to a listener?

**John:** It helps them to talk about what’s on their mind. It’s important for them to know that there is always someone there for them – just to listen and help them deal with their problems.

People think it’s only the drug-addicts who call us but that’s not true. I have seen some tough men, always talking – but then when they are locked up – on their own – they become very quiet. It’s hard. They can feel lonely and sad as well. That’s when they call for a Listener.