Module: Social skills;

**Four ears**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame:</th>
<th>~ 45 minutes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>indoors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>3 - 20 persons</td>
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<td>(the exercise can be realised with one group of 3 – 6 persons with max. four groups)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>4 pinboards or tables; sheets (see below); lots of cards &amp; pens</td>
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<td>- in each corner of the room, there is one pinboard/table, one on the ear “facts”, one on the ear “self-revelation”, one on the ear “relationship” and one on the ear “demand”;</td>
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<td>- the respective sheet is on the board/table;</td>
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<td>- there are cards and pens at each board/table</td>
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<td>Procedure:</td>
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<td>- before starting the exercise, the trainer explains the four-ear-model of Schultz von Thun (see sheet);</td>
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<td>- the participants are divided into groups of 3 – 6 persons, max. four groups;</td>
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<td>- if the participants are able, they can discuss and do the exercise on their own, if not they need either a “guide” who leads the group from one board to the next or there is a guide at each board;</td>
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<td>- the group can discuss the examples and think of further examples from their own lives.</td>
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Variation A) each group comes to each of the 4 pinboards, discusses the topic and pins cards on the pinboard with their impressions; after 10 minutes, the groups change pinboards and go to the next topic;

Variation B) each group only works with one topic; the group discusses the example on the pin board, thinks of more examples from their own lives, chooses one own examples and prepares a short role play; after 30 minutes, the groups assemble and present their “particular ear” by acting the role play and giving some short comments
<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Goal / purpose:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>- participants experience and train the different aspects of understanding and interpreting a message</td>
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<tr>
<td>- participants get a feeling for their own “preferred” ways of interpreting a message and become more sensitive when detecting their communication partners’ “strong ears”</td>
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<th><strong>Questions for discussion:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>see sheets below!</td>
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**Four-Ear-Model**

*(Source: Schultz von Thun, German psychologist and communication scientist)*

Each message has four aspects and each receiver has four ears:

- **Facts:** mere data & facts of message
- **Self-revelation:** speaker gives information on himself (motives, values, emotions etc.)
- **Relationship:** information on relationship between sender & receiver
- **Demand:** wish or demand to the receiver

**Example:** (black: his message; blue: her interpretation)

- **Facts:**
  - “I see something green”
  - “He sees something green”
- **Self-revelation:**
  - “I don’t know what it is”
  - “He doesn’t like it”
- **Relationship:**
  - “I expect that you know what it is”
  - “He thinks I’m a bad cook!”
- **Demand:**
  - “Please tell me what it is!”
  - “I shall only cook things he likes.”

Often people have one ear that’s more sensitive than the others. Probably you know a person who always interprets personal criticism or blame in very simple and neutral messages!? This person has a very sensitive ear for relationship-messages.

⇒ It’s not useful to hear only one aspect of a message! We should not interpret aspects of messages that are not clearly sent by the speaker!
Ear 1: Facts

At first glance, hearing the mere facts of a message seems to be the best solution for correct understanding. But is this true?

⇒ Get into discussion:

- What happens when people only hear the facts of a message?
- Do you know situations or persons in your own life with a strong tendency to hear facts?
- How do you feel when you communicate with these persons?

The stars are sparkling so brightly....

The stars don’t sparkle! It’s only the light splitting in the levels of the atmosphere!
Ear 2: Self-revelation

Example:

[Father looking into the messy room of his son]

Father: “What absolute chaos!! You are a slob!! It’s horrible to live in such a mess!”

Son: “Did you have a bad day in the office, dad?”

⇒ Get into discussion:

• What’s the boy’s benefit of interpreting his father’s statement like this?

• How could the father formulate the sentence so the son with the self-revelation-ear will understand correctly?

• Do you know persons who have a strong tendency to interpret self-revelation while communicating?
Ear 3: Relationship

Example:

⇒ Get into discussion:

- What is happening in this scene?
- What kind of problems will the couple have if the woman always hears with her relationship-ear?
- Do you remember situations in your life when you had a strong relationship-ear? What happened, and how did you solve the situation?
Ear 4: Demand

Example:

⇒ Get into discussion:

• What will happen to people who always interpret demands while communicating? How will other persons probably react to these demand-hearers?

• Do you know persons in your everyday life who have this strong demand-ear?

• How could you protect yourself from having a strong demand-ear?

Is there any more coffee left?

I’ll make more coffee immediately!