Session 46: Listening Like a Leader: The Peer Support Conversation

Phase 5 — Giving Back: Service, Leadership & Purpose · Block 2 — Mentoring & Leadership

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 46 handout (Listening Like a Leader) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

The MI-informed listening style facilitators have used all through this curriculum — in check-ins, discussions, and planning — is a learnable peer skill in smaller form: open questions that cannot be answered yes or no, reflections that hand a person's meaning back to them slightly clearer, and summaries that let them hear their own reasons for change. Its opposite, the righting reflex (Session 39), argues, warns, and fixes — and reliably produces a defense of the very behavior it attacks.

- Questions open; verdicts close 'What is the hardest part of tonight for you?' opens a door. 'You just need to get serious' closes one. A peer's questions make room; their verdicts make resistance.
- Reflect before you respond Hand back the heart of what they said — 'So the cravings hit hardest after your brother calls' — and let them correct it. Being understood accurately is itself an intervention.
- Their step, their words End with their next step in their sentence: 'So tonight you will call your sponsor before dinner — did I get that right?' A step they authored is a step they keep.

Goals for this session

- ☐ I can use the three peer listening moves: open question, reflection, summary
- ☐ I can recognize and refuse the righting reflex (Session 39) in a helping conversation
- ☐ I can run a ten-minute peer conversation that ends with the other person's own next step

Check-in

Think of the last time you felt truly heard — not fixed, heard. What did the listener actually do?

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. Which is harder for you: asking, reflecting, or staying quiet while they think? Why?

2. When has advice — even good advice — made you dig in? What was happening inside you?

3. What topics are beyond a peer conversation and belong to staff, no matter how well you listen? (Review Session 45's lines.)

4. What was the best reflection you offered in a peer conversation, and what next step did the other person name in their own words?

Session 46 — Skill Practice

Listening lab (in trios, two rounds): the speaker talks about a real but moderate current challenge; the listener may only ask open questions and reflect — no advice, no story-swapping; the observer counts advice attempts and notes the best reflection. Rotate so everyone listens once. The facilitator debriefs: what did the speakers' own next steps sound like?

The best reflection I offered in a peer conversation:

The next step the other person named, in their own words:

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ Hold one real peer conversation this week using the three moves. Write down the best reflection you offered and the next step they named, in their words, with their permission.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.