



Goldilocks – A Listening exercise

Time:

The exercise in this module can be completed within:

15 minutes

In total, allowing for discussion, we recommend allowing:

30 minutes

The aims of this module are:

- To test listening skills.
- To illustrate the dangers of making assumptions.
- To encourage participants to think about how they can check their understanding of information they receive.

The module is suitable for:

Very small groups (fewer than 8 participants).	✓
Normal groups (8-15 participants).	✓
Large groups (more than 15 participants).	✓
Very large groups (more than 25 participants).	✓

And is suitable for:

Staff at all levels.

You'll need the following additional resources:

None but we suggest pre-preparing a flipchart sheet with the statements listed in the handout.

We've included a recording of the story, which can be played to participants if you prefer not to read it yourself. This can add to the story telling atmosphere. The recording can be downloaded and played as an MP3 file on any compatible equipment, including, for example, a laptop or ipod.

Notes:




We'd like to thank John Holloway for giving us permission to include it in the library.

This module is suitable for staff at all levels and can be used as an icebreaker, simple listening exercise, or as a short exercise to demonstrate how assumptions are made.

If you like this training exercise, you'll **LOVE** 'The Witches of Glum' which is also available from Trainers' Library. 'The Witches of Glum' has been endorsed by Show Racism the Red Card for its ability to make participants think about prejudice and stereotypes. To find out more about the great work this charity is doing to educate against racism, visit www.srtrc.org.



Symbols used to highlight important information:

	Background information.		Ideas that you might want to use.
	Things to look out for.		Visual Aid – for example, PowerPoint.



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Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Describe the importance of checking understanding.
- Explain the dangers of making assumptions.

Exercise



Pre-prepare a flipchart with a list of the statements from the handout, without participants seeing. Ensure these are kept covered until after the exercise is complete.

It is important to run the following exercise without too much introduction.

Ask participants to put their papers and pens aside, sit back, and listen to the following story. Then read the story that begins on the next page at a normal storytelling pace.



Read the story through a few times out loud beforehand to practise.

The Story

One day Goldilocks decided to go for a walk in the forest. Pretty soon she came upon a house. She knocked on the door, and when no-one answered, she walked right in.

At the table in the kitchen Goldilocks saw some bowls of porridge. Goldilocks was hungry. She tasted the porridge from the first bowl.

"This porridge is too hot!" she exclaimed.

So she tasted the porridge from the second bowl.

"This porridge is too cold." she said.

So she tasted the next bowl of porridge.

"This porridge is just right," she said happily, and she tucked in to it.

After she'd eaten her fill of porridge, she decided she was feeling a little tired, so she walked into the next room where she saw some chairs. Goldilocks sat in the first chair to rest her feet.

"This chair is too big!" she exclaimed.

So she sat in the second chair.

"This chair is too big as well!" she whined.

So she tried the smallest chair.

"Ah, this chair is just right!" she sighed. But as she settled into it, it broke into tiny pieces.

Goldilocks was very tired by this time, so she went to the bedroom. She lay on the first bed but it was too hard.

She lay on the second bed, but it was too soft. Then she lay on the third bed and it was just right. Goldilocks fell asleep.

While she was sleeping, the three bears came home.

"Someone's been eating my porridge!" said Papa Bear.

"Someone's been eating my porridge!" said Mama Bear.

"Someone's been eating my porridge too!" cried Baby Bear.

"Someone's been sitting in my chair!" growled Papa Bear.

"Someone's been sitting in my chair!" said Mama Bear.

"Someone's been sitting in my chair," cried Baby Bear, "and they've broken it all to bits!"

The bears decided to look around some more and when they got to the bedroom, Papa bear growled "Someone's been sleeping in my bed!"

"Someone's been sleeping in my bed too!" said Mama Bear

"Someone's been sleeping in my bed and she's still there!" cried Baby bear.

Goldilocks woke up and when she saw the bears she jumped up and ran out of the room. Goldilocks ran downstairs, opened the door, and ran away into the forest.

After reading the story, issue the handout to each participant, and ask them to tick all of the statements that are true.

Allow 2-3 minutes for this exercise, and then ask participants to swap their handout with someone else.

Uncover the flipchart you prepared previously with the list of statements and run through each one in turn.

Read the first statement again and ask for a show of hands from participants who thought it was true.

Ask one participant to explain why they thought it was true, and then ask someone else why they didn't.

Explain that this statement should not have been ticked as 'true'.

Run through the rest of the statements in turn. The answers follow. Discuss the reasons for mistakes as you go.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Answer</i>
1. Goldilocks was a little girl.	Should not be ticked. The story doesn't mention either Goldilock's age or her physical size.
2. Goldilocks knocked on the door before entering the house.	True.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Answer</i>
3. The bears had porridge for breakfast.	Should not be ticked. We don't know if the porridge was for breakfast, and we don't know if the bear's ate what was left.
4. Papa Bear's porridge was too hot.	Should not be ticked. We only know that the first bowl of porridge that Goldilocks tried was too hot. We don't know whose porridge this was.
5. There were three bears.	True.
6. Goldilocks ate all of the porridge in one bowl.	Should not be ticked. The story says she ate her full, which may or may not have been the whole bowl.
7. There were three chairs in the lounge.	Should not be ticked. We don't know that the 'next room' was the lounge, or how many chairs were in this room. The story says there were 'some' chairs.
8. Goldilocks broke Baby Bear's chair.	True.
9. Goldilocks went upstairs to the bedroom.	True. When the bears discovered Goldilocks in the bedroom, she ran downstairs.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Answer</i>
10. Mama Bear's bed was too soft.	Should not be ticked. We know it was the 'second bed' but we don't know whose bed this was.
11. When Goldilocks saw the bears she was frightened.	Should not be ticked. We don't know that she was frightened. She might have been feeling guilty or ashamed!
12. Goldilocks ran off into the forest.	True.



At some point during the discussion it is likely that someone will refer to Baby Bear as 'he'.

Ask them why they assume Baby Bear was male. It doesn't say he's a male bear in the story.

Discuss the results of this exercise, developing the learning points you want to. Some suggested discussion questions are included on the following pages.

<i>Discussion Questions</i>	<i>Learning Points</i>
<p>How many of you made mistakes?</p>	<p>Most participants are likely to have made mistakes.</p>
<p>What caused you to make mistakes?</p>	<p>The biggest cause of mistakes will have been assumptions. Participants will have made assumptions based on the limited information provided, and on their previous experiences. Most will have heard a similar story in the past and will have used this to make assumptions about the one they heard today.</p>
<p>How many of you made assumptions, based on the limited information provided?</p>	<p>We can make similar mistakes when assuming one customer is the same as another, particularly if they share, for example, the same sex, age or ethnic background.</p>
<p>What caused you to do that?</p>	<p>We can also make the mistake of assuming one situation is the same as another, when it might be very different.</p>
<p>Why did you make these assumptions?</p>	
<p>What were the assumptions based upon?</p>	

<i>Discussion Questions</i>	<i>Learning Points</i>
<p>What does this tell you?</p> <p>What can we do to avoid making assumptions?</p> <p>What can we do to identify assumptions, and limit their impact?</p>	<p>The important thing for participants to understand from this exercise is that we all have the potential to make assumptions about what others are telling us.</p> <p>It is important that we listen as objectively as possible.</p> <p>There are two essential skills that will help us identify assumptions, and manage them.</p> <p>The first is to reflect back to people what we believe they have told us, using our own words. This will allow the other person to immediately correct our misunderstandings.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Listener: "So, a little girl called Goldilocks went into the bear's house?"</p> <p>Story teller: "Well actually Goldilocks was a teenager."</p> <p>We can use summary in any situation where we want to make sure that we've interpreted the information that we've been given correctly.</p>

<i>Discussion Questions</i>	<i>Learning Points</i>
<p>What's the other thing we can do?</p>	<p>The other thing we can do to check our understanding of information is ask open questions. Questions beginning with 'where', 'when', 'who', 'what', and 'how' are particularly useful for gathering facts.</p> <p>So, for example, questions like, "How many bears were there? and "Whose porridge did Goldilocks eat? would have helped in this exercise (if participants had the opportunity to ask questions of course).</p>

Allow some time for participants to record the learning points.



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