

# THE PRAIRIE PROFESSIONAL

KAE4-HA NEWSLETTER



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"A holiday is an opportunity to  
journey within."

- Prabhas

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension



## President's Message - Kaitlyn Peine

### A Time to Reset

It's hard to believe we are just a few days away from 2022. The past year has flown by. It's safe to say 2021 started with a spirit of hopefulness. As time proceeded, many of us managed to find pieces of normalcy we were longing for. However, the reality is, there are still parts of our professional and personal lives that are not what they were in 2019. We have continually adapted through staffing shortages, shifting family priorities, and other obstacles that have popped up along the way.



I hope many of you have the opportunity to enjoy time with your loved ones over the holidays. I encourage you to intentionally unplug during this time. Set your out of office reply and plan to look over email and check voicemail messages when you return to the office. You have likely heard me say, "We are not brain surgeons." Very little we do as Extension professionals deals with actual life or death consequences. I hope you feel empowered to be not only physically, but also emotionally present for your family and friends over the holiday break.

The start of a new year is also a great time to hit the reset button. I gave up on making new year's resolutions years ago. We are all in the business of supporting research based information. Research says new year's resolutions don't work for changing behaviors. Instead consider creating an action step for one to two habits you can improve. I know I need to pull out the recycling bin and clean my office. Personally, to take better care of myself, I hope to drink more water and less coffee. Starting small allows for a higher probability of early success. You can do this!

Whatever you do to celebrate the holidays, I hope you create space to recharge and plan for an even better new year. I wish you a happy and healthy new year.

Kaitlyn Peine  
KAE4-HA President

## Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program Rally

Make plans to attend and/or present at the 2022 Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program Rally. The event will be held January 25, 26, and 27 at the Lyon County Fairgrounds, Emporia, Kansas.

### Daily Plan:

January 25 – Program Rally Begins at 12:30 p.m. with an optional lunch available at 12:00 p.m.

January 26 – Program Rally All Day

January 27 – Program Rally Ends at 12:00 p.m. without a lunch option

The planning committee is taking proposals for Workshops (45-minute sessions) and Spark Sessions (10-minute session led multiple times) at the Rally! Please consider sharing some of your good work! Proposals need to be received on or before Sunday, January 9 and proposal notifications should be made by January 14. Submit proposals to: [https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3Ot3FiaOSZoyzhs](https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3Ot3FiaOSZoyzhs)

Registration is \$60 and is expected to open on January 13th and close on the 19th. The fee will cover lunch on Wednesday, daily snacks, speakers, and materials etc. There is also an option for lunch onsite Tuesday for \$13. Information will be in a folder in Teams and on the Kansas 4-H Staff Resources website. Detailed schedule, hotel blocks and other information coming after the new year.

## Fall KAE4-HA Outgoing and Incoming Officer Recognition



Thank you to the 2020-2021 Officers and Area Directors for your service!

Pictured: Robyn Trussel, Lindsey Mueting, Kaitlyn Peine, Corinne Patterson, Jennifer Terrell, Jill Martinson, Anne Pitts, and Jenny McDaniel.

### Congrats to our 2021-2022 Officers and Area Directors!

#### Officers:

President: Kaitlyn Peine  
 President-Elect: John Jobe  
 Past-President: Lindsey Mueting  
 Secretary: Jenny McDaniel  
 Treasurer: Ginger Kopfer  
 Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Terrell  
 Public Relations Director: Michelle Beran

#### Area Directors:

Northeast: Olivia Barker  
 Northwest: Robyn Trussel  
 Southeast: Anne Pitts  
 Southwest: Amy Sollock  
 State: Aliah Mestrovich Seay

## Update your NAE4-HYDP Profile



Have you updated your profile for 2021-2022? If not, log into [www.nae4hydp.org](http://www.nae4hydp.org) to do so. You will be prompted to update your profile after signing in. If you are asked about payment please DO NOT PAY online. Instead, please select "Bill me Later". The dues portion for national is paid from what you have already paid to our State Association. If you are a new member please create a member profile to join. If you haven't paid, the fee is now \$125. Please complete the qualtrics and pay at: [https://www.geary.k-state.edu/4-h/kae4ha\\_membership.html](https://www.geary.k-state.edu/4-h/kae4ha_membership.html)

## NAE4-HYDP Award Application Process

NAE4-HYDP recognizes and celebrates the efforts and work of its members through a range of awards. Starting January 15th, KAE4-HA members can begin submitting applications for awards on the State, Regional, and National Levels. All award submissions must be in the online system by March 1st. Check out the NAE4-HYDP website for more details and see what awards you are eligible for.

## NAE4-HYDP Annual Conference - Mark Your Calendars

Want a great opportunity to learn from other extension agents from across the nation? Now is a good time to be thinking about attending the NAE4-HYDP Conference for 2022.

The dates are set for October 11-13 at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, WI. Learn more about the Monona Terrace here: <https://youtu.be/t7SKz1n1quc>

There are several KAE4-HA members who have attended these conferences in the past, so if you have questions make sure to ask. There will be more details to come. To see a sneak peak, check this out: <https://youtu.be/GNb1wp1mWLU>





# 10 Ways to Become a Great Listener

By Susan Krauss Whitbourne, Ph.D., ABPP



You can undoubtedly sense when you're talking to a good listener. Something about the way the person either looks at you or makes empathic comments allows you to feel comfortable with this individual and, therefore, more likely to open up further. If this person is your romantic partner, this ability to listen allows you to feel emotionally closer, supported, and understood.

As much as you may admire and appreciate being in a relationship with a good listener, perhaps you feel that you're just not all that happy with your own listening skills. You've noticed that people, including your partner, seem frustrated with your lack of responsiveness to their needs. When you meet people for the first time, the conversations seem to run out of steam almost as soon as they get started. Coworkers don't ask you to join them for informal breaks or offline remote chats, and even your relatives seem to get so bored that, at family gatherings, they try to pull away as soon as they can to speak to someone else.

According to a newly-published review paper by University of Haifa's Guy Itzchakov, collaborating with University of Rochester's Harry Reis and University of Reading's Netta Weinstein (2021), decades of previous research support the observation that good listening is a mechanism that drives the "interpersonal connections ... known to conduce many positive intrapersonal affective and cognitive outcomes." "Listening," they continued, "is a basic social behavior and one of the most fundamental features of a social interaction." It's worth sharpening this key aspect of your ability in order to relate well to others.

## The Role of Good Listening in Relationships

The Intimacy Process Model, developed by Reis and coauthor Phil Shaver (1988), proposed that

good listening helps promote "perceived partner responsiveness," which is the belief your partner has that you understand and care for them and validate their view of the world and themselves.

Listening and perceived partner responsiveness form a positive feedback loop that, in turn, promotes a variety of positive relationship outcomes. Your partner will feel less anxious and defensive because you reinforce an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect by showing that you hear them. Your partner doesn't have to be afraid of saying the wrong thing because you show that you won't commit a rush to judgment.

It's not only in close relationships that perceived partner responsiveness comes into play. You may be talking to someone you've recently met and find that you and this person come out on opposite sides of a controversial issue, such as a COVID-related face mask or vaccine mandates. It may infuriate you to hear this person's position. Still, if you allow yourself to listen—and show that you're listening—you may end up having a conversation in which each of you feels respected even if you ultimately disagree.

## 10 Qualities of the Good Listener

All of this is well and good, you may think, but what exactly are the markers of a good listener? Can you think of the behaviors that signify you're being understood, validated, and cared for by someone you consider a good listener?

Seeking to identify these "enacted" behaviors, Itzchakov and his coauthors whittled down a list of 19 indicators that reflect both good listening and high levels of perceived partner responsiveness down to ten that specifically apply to good listening.

These ten qualities fall into the two categories of verbal and nonverbal behaviors and are as follows along with explanations of each:

**Verbal:** Showing that you understand what the person is saying.

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1. **Reflections:** Paraphrase what the other person is saying to show you get the meaning.
2. **Open question:** Ask questions that don't have a simple "yes" or "no" answer to keep the conversation flowing.
3. **Validation:** Reinforce what the person is saying by indicating you understand.
4. **Utterances:** Use simple words that encourage the other person to keep speaking (e.g., uh-huh, okay).
5. **Use the speaker's name:** help the person feel more valued by repeating their name at various points in the conversation or when you want to show you hear them.

**Nonverbal:** Behaviors that indicate you're paying attention.

1. **Facial expressions:** Allow your face to convey interest, empathy, and curiosity.
2. **Head nodding:** Occasionally nod along with what the person is saying, especially at important points in the conversation.
3. **Body posture:** Orient your position to show you're paying attention by allowing your body to turn towards the other person.
4. **Gaze:** Maintain eye contact with the speaker and don't look distractedly elsewhere.
5. **Silence:** Stay quiet and don't interrupt the other person or seem too eager to break in.

How many of these do you feel naturally use in your interactions with others? Do you feel that some of these are easier to put into practice than others? Although the authors don't rate these in terms of difficulty, it would seem that the toughest require the most effort, such as reflecting and validating.

It's pretty easy to nod your head and even easier to use the other person's name. However, showing that you are not only paying attention but also comprehending may take some practice.

## How Can Good Listening Benefit Your Relationships?

Within the model, connecting good listening to

perceived partner responsiveness, the Israeli-led research team identified a host of favorable outcomes. One set is those they labeled as cognitive and included greater open-mindedness, changes in attitudes, and less tendency to put on a false front to impress the other person. The affective or emotional changes had higher self-esteem, more positive emotions, and higher levels of well-being.

Finally, in terms of behavior, good listening sets off a chain of positive changes that can lead the other person to be more likely to engage in self-disclosure and a higher sense of "interpersonal chemistry." You know you've clicked with someone else. This last finding suggests when that person seems to understand you and care about what you have to say.

The good listening-perceived responsiveness connection becomes particularly important in a long-term close relationship. Going beyond just the idea that you and your partner have strong positive affective bonds (i.e., "love"), Itzchakov and his colleagues maintained that "although a necessary component, [it] is generally insufficient to produce satisfying resolutions; rather attention and responsiveness are also needed."

Your partner may be telling you about a successful day at work, but instead of showing that you're listening, you seem bored or go to great pains to point out the downside to the day's events. The authors maintained that this kind of poor listening is associated with "relationship distress."

To sum up, in the authors' words, listening is "an active contribution to conversational dynamics rather than a passive act of receiving information." Honing your listening skills by following these ten tips will allow you to enhance the broad range of social relationships that ultimately promote your own fulfillment and those of the people you've listened to.