

PSW Staff Reflections on the 2024 Word of the Year: *Listen*

Sarah Sorum's 2025 word of the year is **Listen**. We asked PSW and *JPSW* staff to reflect on what the word serve means to them:

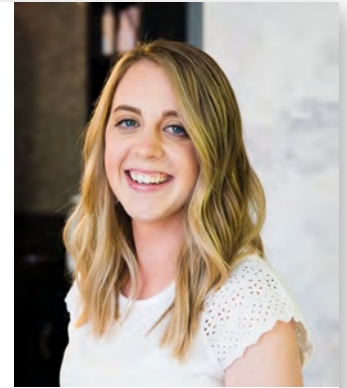


Michael Nagy,
Associate Editor of *JPSW*

In a world often filled with noise, the word of the year, listen, invites me to pause and truly connect. Listening goes beyond hearing; it requires attention, empathy, and intention. When I listen to others, I create space for understanding, foster collaboration, and build trust. When I listen to myself, I cultivate self-awareness. Listening is the foundation of meaningful relationships and the key to thoughtful action. As I reflect on this word, it reminds me to be present, to truly hear what is said—and unsaid—and to let listening guide me toward greater compassion and growth.

Jennifer Pitterle, Copy Editor for *JPSW*

As an editor, I'm often expected to be the final "expert" on a piece of writing, omniscient in matters of style and grammar and tone. Working with *JPSW* is a wonderful reminder to me that there are a zillion folks smarter than I am in the universe, and I learn so much by reading their work. I love the opportunity to "listen" with my eyes to the smart, important research and ideas by the pharmacy pros behind *The Journal*.



Megan Grant,
**Director of Marketing, Communication &
Design, Managing Editor of *JPSW***

As a mom of young boys, I often find myself asking them to "listen"—whether it's to put their toys away or to pay attention to their teachers at school. It's a word I use at least once a day. But over time, I've come to realize that listening is about much more than simply hearing words. True listening means taking those words to heart and making a conscious effort to understand the message someone is trying to convey. Too often, we might think we're "listening," but we fail to grasp the deeper intent or meaning behind what's being said. It's easy to hear, but it takes intention to truly listen. In 2025, I hope we can all strive to listen—not just to the words spoken, but to the emotions, intentions, and meaning that lie beneath them. Let's aim to truly connect through the power of genuine listening.





**Kari Trapskin,
Senior Vice President of Practice
Transformation**

The word *listen* is simple but important, especially in today's world where we're surrounded by constant noise. Truly listening goes beyond hearing words—it's about being present and understanding the emotion and details behind what's being shared. With so many distractions, like phone alerts, emails, texts, instant messages, and social media, it's easy to lose sight of how valuable real listening is.

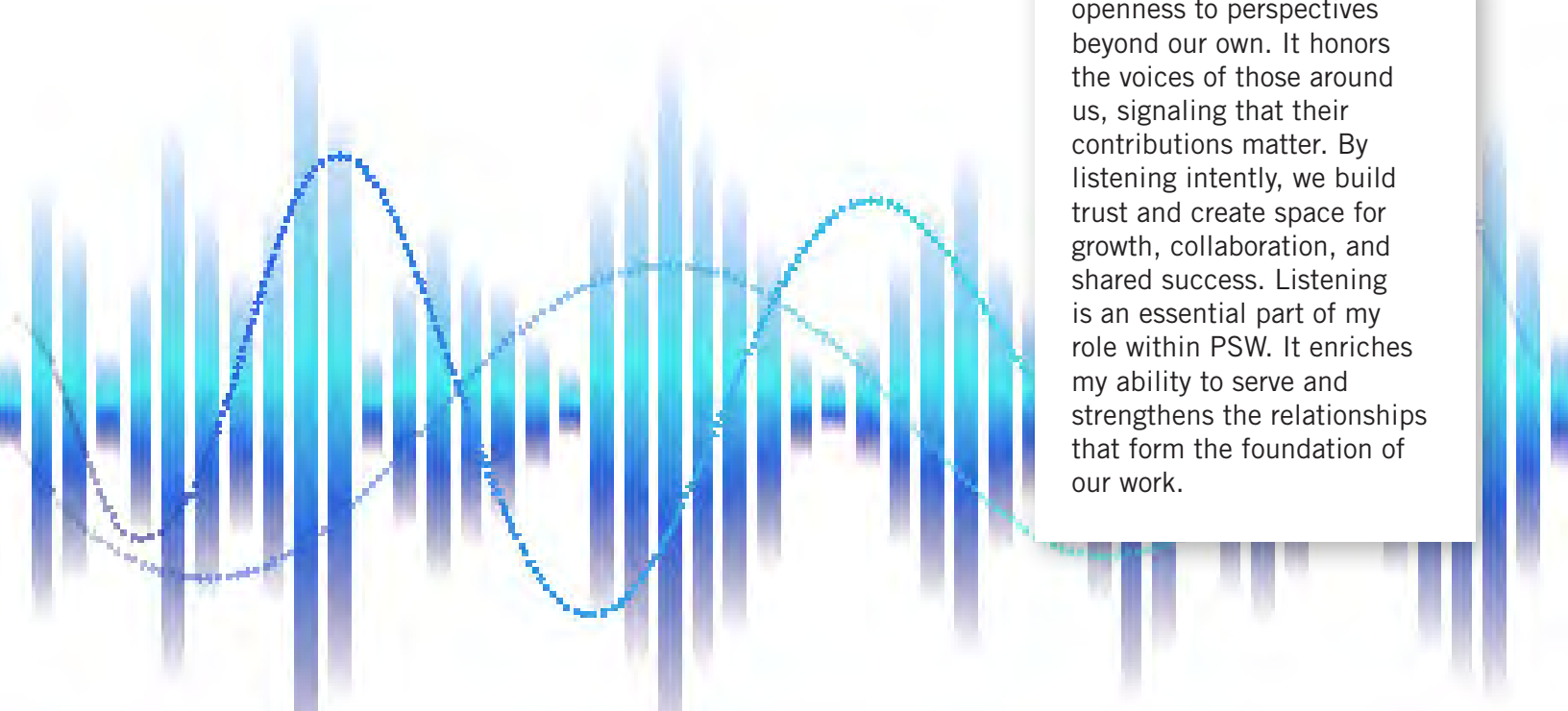
I value meaningful verbal conversations, both personally and professionally. It's in those moments of genuine listening that relationships are strengthened, understanding is deepened, and innovation takes root. In 2025, my goal is to be more intentional about what I listen to and focus on, cutting through the noise to prioritize what truly matters.

I'm particularly excited to listen to PSW members next year as you share your efforts to creatively transform your practices. By hearing your successes and challenges, I hope to learn from the innovative ways you approach change, create opportunities for growth, support PSW members with similar challenges, and make a meaningful impact in 2025.



**Kate Hartkopf,
Director of Team-based
Care Strategies & Business
Development
Managing Director,
Wisconsin Pharmacy
Foundation**

The word *listen* reminds me of the quiet strength that comes with truly hearing others—not just their words, but their needs, struggles, and dreams. Listening allows us to understand those we serve and serve with on a deeper level. Listening requires patience, presence, and an openness to perspectives beyond our own. It honors the voices of those around us, signaling that their contributions matter. By listening intently, we build trust and create space for growth, collaboration, and shared success. Listening is an essential part of my role within PSW. It enriches my ability to serve and strengthens the relationships that form the foundation of our work.



**Kay Schell,
Office Manager and
Receptionist**

To me, *listen* means to actually hear and understand what the other person is trying to tell you, whether it be through words or actions. You need to listen wholeheartedly and make that person feel like they really matter to you.



**Ellen Brummel,
Director of Membership
& Events**

The word *listen* in 2025 will remind me to focus on engaging effectively with the people around me, enhancing relationships, and embracing new ideas. Being an active listener will help me be more present in the moment, tune out distractions, and ultimately enjoy a calmer atmosphere at work and in life.



**Sarah Pagenkopf,
Director of Professional & Educational Services**

A fundamental aspect of our work at PSW is supporting the development of pharmacy professionals so they can best serve their patients and communities. At the core of this mission is communication, and a vital part of being a good communicator is the ability to truly listen. Listening involves focusing on the speaker, understanding the meaning of their words and ideas, and paying close attention to non-verbal cues as well. My servant leadership role within PSW allows me to be committed to amplifying One Voice by listening to all voices—whether I'm engaging with members at a conference, participating in a member meet-up, attending a Technician Section Board or Board Meeting, or contributing to a PSW Advisory Meeting. I'm here, and I'm listening. When I meet with our PSW grant partners, exhibitors, and community allies, connect with members of the Wisconsin Pharmacy Foundation, or collaborate with our past and future Presidents—I'm here, and I'm listening. When you email, call, or stop by the office to visit—I'm here and I'm listening! I saw a quote that said, "One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say." To the PSW community, I promise you this: I'm here, and I'm listening.

