



Listening

Solution

What...

Active listening is the ability or habit of listening to the speaker with full concentration using all your senses.

Active listening opens your opportunities to understand the speaker's perspective and to communicate that understanding back to the speaker so that he or she can confirm the accuracy of your understanding. In essence, the speaker will feel not only heard, but understood.



Active listening skills can improve many experiences and relationships in the workplace such as training and orientation, rounding, service recovery, and in all other interactions with employees/coworkers as well as patients, their families, and visitors.

A leading cause of many errors is related to communication issues. Errors, including those that lead to patient harm, can be reduced when the accuracy of what is communicated is verified through active listening techniques.

**“Listening is an art that requires attention over
talent, spirit over ego, others over self.”**

- Dean Jackson

How...



To improve your listening skills, one or more of the following **Active Listening Tactics** can be used.

Paraphrasing – restate, in your own words, what the speaker said.

This tests your understanding of what was heard and demonstrates that you are trying to understand the message accurately.

► **Examples:**

"What I heard you say is...."

"To make sure I've heard you correctly,"

"It sounds like you are saying...."

Also, you could follow any of the above with: "Can you correct me if I didn't get that right?"

Clarifying – inviting the speaker to explain something further.

Gives you the opportunity to clarify what has been communicated and gives the speaker the opportunity to elaborate and achieve clarity.

► **Examples:**

"Can you say more about....?"

"I'm not quite sure I understand, could you explain more about....?"

“Do not listen with the intent to reply, but with the intent to understand.”



Minimal Encouragements – sounds made to the other person know you are listening (more important during a phone conversation, but helpful face-to-face too).

Assures the speaker you are listening yet doesn't interfere with the flow of the conversation and encourages the speaker to keep talking.

► **Examples:**

"Oh?"

"When?"

"Really?"

"I see."

"I understand."

Reflecting or Emotion Labeling – communicating back to the speaker that you understand how he/she feels about something.

Deepens understanding of feelings/emotions and demonstrates empathy.

► **Examples:**

"I get the sense that you might be feeling frustrated about...."

"It seems like you are worried about...."

"So, you're saying that you were feeling angry...."

Summarizing – identify, connect, and integrate the key items and feelings from what was communicated

Helps both the listener and the speaker to bring clarity about what is most important to be understood.

► **Examples:**

"Let me summarize what I heard...."

"I've heard several things that are important to you; first..., second..., & third...."

"It sounds like there are two things that matter most to you...."



Validating – show appreciation for the speaker's efforts.

Acknowledges the value of talking and affirms positive feels about being engaged in this communication.

► Examples:

"I'm really glad we are able to have this talk."

"It makes me feel good that you shared this with me."

"This conversation was very valuable. Thank you."

Non-Verbal Characteristics of Active Listening

► Examples:

- Maintain comfortable eye contact (not too much, not too little)
- Position yourself in a "full frontal stance" (their shoulders facing your shoulders at a comfortable distance – preferably without a desk between you) or walk side-by-side
- Erect or forward posture
- Nodding
- Note taking
- Smiling and other positive facial expressions
- Tone and volume of voice
- Appropriate gestures and touch
- Avoid multi-tasking or distractions (phone, computer, looking at watch/clock)
- Avoid fidgeting

