

Active Listening Skills

Pay Attention

- Give the speaker your undivided attention.
- Look at the speaker directly and lean in.
- Pay attention to your non-verbal communication such as posture and facial gestures.
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors.
- Be present, do not focus on what you will say next or interrupt.
- Remember some key points to reflect back.
- Keep an open mind, do not judge or mentally criticize.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with nods and limited affirming verbal comments such as “umm-hmmm,” or “yes.”

Provide Feedback

- **Paraphrasing:** Restating a message, but usually with fewer words.
“It seems like she really confuses you.”
 - **Clarifying:** Bringing vague material into sharper focus.
“Let me see if I’ve got it all...”
 - **Perception Checking:** Request for verification of your perceptions.
“Let me see if I’ve got this right. You said you feel the project is important, but at the same time you find it frustrating. Is that what you are saying?”
 - **Validation:** Acknowledge the individual’s challenges and feelings.
“I appreciate your willingness to talk about...”
 - **Summarizing:** Pulling it all together, organizing and integrating the major aspects of your dialogue.
“So it sounds to me as if...”
 - **Empathy:** Reflection of content and feeling.
“Your feel (state feeling) because (state content).”
- * Remember that silence (as well as long pauses) can be golden.