

Active Listening

Active Listening...Some Helpful Hints

Things to Try	Things to Avoid
<p>Put the focus of attention totally on the speaker.</p> <p>Repeat conversationally and tentatively, in your words, your understanding of the speaker's meaning.</p> <p>Feed back feelings, as well as content (probe, if appropriate, e.g. "How do you feel about that?" or "How did that affect you?").</p> <p>Reflect back not only to show you understand, but also so the speaker can hear and understand his or her own meaning.</p> <p>Try again if your active listening statement is not well received.</p> <p>Be as accurate in the summary of the meaning as you can.</p> <p>Challenge powerlessness and hopelessness subtly (e.g. "It is hopeless", "It seems hopeless to you right now.", "There's nothing I can do.", "You can't find anything that could fix it?").</p> <p>Allow silences in the conversation.</p> <p>Notice body shifts and respond to them by waiting. Then, e.g. "How does it all seem to you now?"</p>	<p>Avoid talking about yourself.</p> <p>Reject introducing your own reactions or well intentioned comments.</p> <p>Try not to ignore feelings in the situation.</p> <p>Avoid advising, diagnosing, baiting, reassuring, encouraging, or criticizing.</p> <p>Dispense with thinking about what you will say next.</p> <p>Avoid parroting the speaker's words or only saying 'mm', or "ah, hah".</p> <p>Don't pretend that you have understood if you haven't.</p> <p>Avoid letting the speaker drift to less significant topics because you haven't shown you've understood.</p> <p>Avoid fixing, changing, or improving what the speaker has said.</p> <p>Don't change topics.</p> <p>Resist filling in every space with your talk.</p> <p>Don't neglect the non-verbal content of the conversation.</p>