



PRACTICING LISTENING SKILLS

Listening is an art, a skill, and a discipline. Like other skills, it requires self-control. You must understand what is involved in listening and develop the necessary techniques to be silent and listen. You must ignore your own needs and focus attention on the person speaking. Hearing becomes listening only when you pay attention to what is said and follow it very closely.

If you are struggling and can't manage it on your own, it may be time to contact a professional.

CARE WorkLife Solutions offers sessions with our experienced master level counselors. Sessions can be in person or virtual – whichever you are comfortable with, and are completely confidential and at no cost to you.

12 ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS



PAY ATTENTION



DON'T INTERRUPT



SUMMARIZE



MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT



SHOW INTEREST



REQUEST CLARIFICATION



USE POSITIVE BODY LANGUAGE



PARAPHRASE



WITHHOLD JUDGEMENT



SHOW EMPATHY



REPEAT KEY PHRASES



SHARE

Ways You Demonstrate That You Are Listening

- » Your body language
- » Making eye contact
- » Keeping your body open
- » Nods of your head

You Listen in Order to...

- » Show your support and help the other person(s) relax.
- » Show you are accepting them and are open to them.
- » Be able to ask questions to clarify.
- » Restate or paraphrase.

You also need to practice reacting and responding in positive ways. Using good responding skills helps people understand the things you care about. It also helps you collect information about the situation.

- » Ask clarifying questions.
- » Restate what the other person is saying, catching the essence but trying to take out the volatile phrases or language. This can reduce friction.
- » Summarize facts and feelings.
- » Try to always use "I" language instead of "you" language. For example, don't say, "When you do that, you make me feel..." Instead you can say, "When you do that I feel..."

You listen by paying attention.

Paying attention and listening without interruption allows the other person to "let off steam." Before any serious resolutions can occur, you need to let the other person know that you understand where they are coming from and you understand that they feel strongly about the issues you are discussing with them. You should use verbal cues such as these:

- » "I see."
- » "I understand."
- » "That's a good point."
- » "I can see that you feel strongly about that."
- » "I can understand how you could see it like that."

These nonverbal actions also show the other person that you hear what they are saying:

- » Squarely face the other person.
- » Lean discreetly, not threateningly, toward the other person.
- » Maintain eye contact. Take cues from the other person as to the extent of eye contact with which he or she is comfortable.
- » Try to relax as you interact with the other person.

Of course, for the other person to know that you are listening, you must make a response. The effectiveness of your listening will be determined by the style and quality of your response.