



## Improving your Communication through Active Listening

The easiest way to show empathy is to really listen to someone, without judgment or trying to fix things. Active Listening is when you are consciously making an effort to understand the entire message the speaker is sending.

### Active Listening Techniques:

- 1. Pay attention.** Give the speaker your full attention - no checking your phone, no thinking about what you are going to say next. Rather, listen to the words, the emotional tone, and pay attention to body language.
- 2. Be involved.** Show the speaker you are listening through non-verbal communication like maintaining appropriate eye contact, nodding, leaning forward, using appropriate facial expressions, etc.
- 3. Provide feedback to the speaker through reflection.** Paraphrase what the speaker has said or the emotion he/she is displaying. Use phrases like “This seems really important to you...” or “It sounds like you are feeling...”
- 4. Ask questions to clarify.** If you are uncertain about something or need more information, ask open-ended questions. Avoid leading questions or yes-no questions as they tend to limit the speaker’s response.
- 5. Don’t interrupt.** Interrupting will only frustrate the speaker and heighten negative emotions. Let the speaker finish before you respond.
- 6. Summarize what the speaker said.** Summarizing allows you to agree on what was said and to check for understanding. Use phrases like, “What I am hearing is...” or “From what you said, I understand that...”