

Strategies for Effective Listening

Listening is a skill that can be practiced and learned. Your goal as a listener is to fully understand the other party's experience and point of view. Give the other party an opportunity to talk for a while before saying anything.

Strategy	Practical Application
Use non-verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be aware of what you communicate with your body - your posture and expressions can convey your attitudes● Use body language to show the speaker that you are engaged in the conversation and open to hearing (e.g., face the speaker; make eye contact)
Recognize your own prejudices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be aware of your feelings toward the speaker● If you are unsure about what the speaker means, ask for clarification instead of making assumptions
Listen to understand the underlying feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use your heart as well as your mind to understand the speaker● Notice how something is said as well as the actual words used
Do not interrupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be sure to think carefully before you speak● As a listener, your job is to help the speaker express themselves
Do not judge the person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A speaker who feels you are making judgments will feel defensive● Avoid making judgments and instead try to empathize and understand the speaker's perspective
Do not give advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Keep in mind that the best resolutions are those that people arrive at themselves, not what someone else tells them to do● If you feel it is appropriate, and only after you have encouraged the person to talk, offer some ideas and discuss them