

Active Listening Skills

Pay attention:

Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the Message they want to convey. What is not said (and pauses for thought) also speaks loudly. Ignore distractions and 'listen' to the speaker's 'body language'.

Show that you are listening:

Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention, e.g. nod your head, smile, have open, inviting posture; use encouragers (yes, uh huh etc.).

Provide feedback:

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. You can reflect what is being said & ask clarifying questions.

Examples of reflecting back:

“What I’m hearing is...”

“Sounds like you are saying...”

Summarise the speaker’s comments periodically.

Defer judgment:

Interrupting is unhelpful, as it frustrates the speaker and limits the full understanding of the message. Therefore, allow the speaker to finish and don’t interrupt with counter-arguments.

Respond Appropriately:

Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. It can be counter-productive to attack the speaker, be ‘unconstructive’ in criticism or ‘put them down’. Be candid, open, honest and thoughtful in your response. Assert your opinions respectfully. Treat the other person as you would want to be treated.

ABACUS Counselling Training & Supervision Ltd **NZQA reg** | **Phone** 09 360 6957

Email office@acts.co.nz **Web** www.acts.co.nz | **Mail** PO Box 90710 Victoria Street West, Auckland 1142