



Active listening

Active listening is a skill. It is more than just hearing someone's words—it involves giving your full attention to the person talking.

Active listening shows that you want to understand the speaker's perspective and that you are fully engaged in the conversation. Using active listening skills improves interpersonal communication and builds stronger, healthier relationships.

How to practice active listening

Active listening incorporates the following techniques:

Give your full attention

- Eliminate distractions and focus solely on the speaker.
- Maintain eye contact, use open body language, and avoid interrupting.

Show you are listening

- Use non-verbal cues, like nodding or smiling, to signal your engagement.
- Mirror the speaker's tone with a calm and receptive demeanor.

Seek to understand

- Paraphrase or summarize the speaker's words to validate their feelings. For example: *"It sounds like you're frustrated because your boss didn't notice all of your hard work on the project."*

Adopt a goodwill posture

- Approach the conversation with empathy and avoid making judgments or assumptions.
- Show compassion and focus on fostering a connection.

Ask clarifying, open-ended questions to deepen your understanding, such as:

- *"Can you tell me more about how that made you feel?"*
- *"How would you like to move forward?"*
- *"What can I do to help improve this situation?"*

Notes:



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Active listening in practice

During your next conversation, practice active listening. Then, use the space below to reflect on your experience.

Who did you practice active listening with?

How did you give your full attention?

What non-verbal cues did you use to show you were listening?

What paraphrasing or summarizing statement did you use?



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What clarifying questions did you ask?

How did the other person respond to your efforts?

How did practicing active listening impact the quality of your conversation?

What challenges did you face while trying to listen actively?