Active Listening

Active listening creates a supportive space in which employees have a voice and can process and talk through emotions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active listening:</th>
<th>Engaging in active listening:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeks a clear understanding of the speaker’s message</td>
<td>Engenders trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicates the listener’s interest in the speaker’s message</td>
<td>Shows appreciation and respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strives for empathy, understanding and attentiveness</td>
<td>Enhances collaboration, teamwork, creativity, and problem solving</td>
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How to Listen Actively

1. Pay Attention
   - Choose to listen
   - Find a good place to listen
   - Put aside distracting thoughts
   - Don’t mentally prepare a rebuttal
   - Avoid being distracted by environmental factors (or acknowledge them and refocus)
   - "Listen" to the speaker’s body language

2. Show You Are Listening
   - Look at the speaker directly and make eye contact
   - Smile and use other facial expressions
   - Nod occasionally
   - Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting
   - Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like “yes” and “uh huh”

3. Use Questions, Check Understanding
   - Use open-ended questions to elicit the speaker’s perspective
   - Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing
   - Ask questions to clarify certain points; ask for examples
   - Regularly summarize to check understanding

4. Defer Judgment
   - Set aside your assumptions and preconceptions
   - Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions
   - Don’t interrupt with counter arguments
   - Focus on understanding before coming to conclusions

5. Respond Appropriately
   - Be thoughtful and intentional in your response — respond versus react
   - Respond in a way that supports mutual understanding and respect
   - Treat the other person in the way you would want to be treated