

## ACTIVE LISTENING

### Listening vs. Hearing

- Hearing - "The process, function, or power of receiving sounds."
- Listening - "To pay attention in order to hear."

### How do I listen "Actively?"

1. Stop Talking! You cannot listen when you are talking...you are only thinking about what you are going to say next!
2. Relax, smile, provide eye contact. Look and act interested and remove distractions such as other people, cel. phones, etc.
3. Pay attention to your non-verbals (see below).
4. Listen for what is NOT said. Not everything a person means is stated. There may be some things that are below the surface.
5. Reflect back what you think you heard. "It seems like..." or "I think you are telling me..."
6. Listen to understand, not oppose. You don't have to agree with what is said to be an effective listener.
7. What are the feelings involved in the conversation? Be aware of the other's non-verbals.
8. Be patient and don't interrupt. Don't finish the person's sentences for them.
9. Don't let your own emotions interfere with listening.
10. Empathize with the speaker and try to talk in that person's shoes.

### Steps for Active Listening

- Reflect the content back. "So you just had an argument with your supervisor?"
- Reflect the feeling. "It seems that you are feeling really anxious about that."
- Partializing. Breakdown the information into smaller parts. "So let's first talk about what your supervisor said that made you feel anxious."
- Supportive Denial. Reject a request, but supply other options. "I'm sorry, but I can't talk to your supervisor for you, but maybe we can figure out some ways to help you talk to her."
- Summarizing. Summarize what was said, what will be done and who will do it. "I agree that we should let this simmer for a day so it isn't so emotional. I'll get some background information and you will go and talk to your supervisor tomorrow about what happened."

### Non-Verbal Communication & Listening

The following are areas to be aware of with your "non-verbal" communication with listening actively:

- Posture - Are you leaning forward, fidgeting, cross-legged, reclined, etc. Good posture would be comfortable and leaning slightly forward.
- Gestures - Should be non-threatening and not distracting to the person speaking.
- Eye Contact - It should be direct, but not sustained in a threatening way.
- Physical Space - Be aware of how close or far you are from the speaker.
- Voice tone, pitch, volume, etc. - Each can influence the message being relayed.
- Voice speed - Be deliberate and not overly slow or fast with your words.