

Active Listening



Objectives



- § To define active listening
- § Identify common myths about listening
- § Identify common listening problems
- § Recognize and use active listening techniques
- § Identify the benefits of active listening

The Three Basic Listening Modes



Modes

Basic Listening Modes

§ **Competitive or Combative Listening**

§ **Passive or attentive Listening**

§ **Active or Reflective Listening**



What is Active Listening?

Active listening is an interactive process for improving the degree of understanding between two or more people. It takes effort, attention and intervention.



**Active listening
presumes
“You are important to
me.”**



Common Myths



§ Listening is the same as hearing.

§ Listening is a passive action.

§ Listening is only done through the ears.

§ Listening is easy to do.

Sources of Difficulty by the Speaker



- § **Voice volume too low to be heard.**
- § **Making the message too complex, either by including too many unnecessary details or too many issues.**
- § **Getting lost, forgetting your point or the purpose of the interaction**
- § **Body language or nonverbal elements contradicting or interfering with the verbal message, such as smiling when anger or hurt is being expressed.**
- § **Paying too much attention to how the other person is taking the message, or how the person might react.**
- § **Using a very unique code or unconventional method for delivering the message.**

Sources of Difficulty by the Listener



- § Being preoccupied and not listening.
- § Being so interested in what you have to say that you listen mainly to find an opening to get the floor.
- § Formulating and listening to your own rebuttal to what the speaker is saying.
- § Evaluating and making judgments about the speaker or the message.
- § Not asking for clarification when you know that you do not understand.



- § Interruptions
- § Stress
- § Own opinions, prejudices
- § Jumping to conclusions
- § Information is uninteresting
- § Difficulty in understanding the other person

Effective Listening Tips

Effective Listening Tips



- **Listen for ideas, not facts** – ask yourself what they mean
- **Listen optimistically** – don't lose interest straight away
- **Do not jump to conclusions**
- **Be flexible**, adjust your note-taking to the speaker
- **Concentrate** – don't start dreaming – and keep eye contact
- **Do not think ahead of the speaker** – you will lose track
- **Work at listening** – be alert and alive
- **Keep emotions under control** when listening



Responsive Listening Tips



- **Open your mind** – practice accepting new information
- **Breathe** slowly and deeply
- **Relax physically** and get comfortable
- **Focus on the speaker** - give the speaker your full attention
- **Show empathy** – show your concern
- **Paraphrase** – check understanding
- **Probe** – clarify the issue to know the real problem
- **Summarize** – recapitulate to effectively communicate with each other.
- **Use verbal prompts** – to show the speaker that you are listening



At Its Best Listening Involves...

- § Hearing
- § Understanding the information
- § Understanding the emotions
- § Checking your understanding
- § Seeing it from the person's viewpoint, without necessarily agreeing



Benefits of Active Listening

- § Ensures involvement
- § Avoids misunderstanding
- § Saves time
- § Improves decisions
- § Builds trust and respect

