



Active Listening:

The Most Important Skill

With Susan DiFabio

Build trust and establish rapport.



Demonstrate concern.



Active Listening Skills

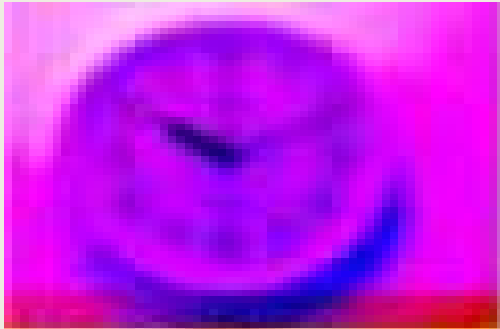
Ask specific questions.



Use brief verbal affirmations like:

Active listening techniques can help you truly understand what people are saying in conversations and meetings





Active Listening Skills

- Reflecting
- Paraphrasing
- Clarifying
- Summarizing



REFLECTION

Reflecting is the process of paraphrasing and restating both the feelings and words of the speaker.

A Simple reflection tells your client that you understand the meaning of their words. Good to use during the engagement phase but be careful not to rely on these only or you may soon be circling.

THE PURPOSES OF REFLECTING

- To allow the speaker to 'hear' their own thoughts and to focus on what they say and feel.
- To show the speaker that you are trying to perceive the world as they see it and that you are doing your best to understand their messages.
- To encourage them to continue talking.

Reflecting does not involve you asking questions, introducing a new topic or leading the conversation in another direction. Speakers are helped through reflecting as it not only allows them to feel understood, but it also gives them the opportunity to focus their ideas. This in turn helps them to direct their thoughts and further encourages them to continue speaking.

GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTING

- Listen for the basic message - consider the content, feeling and meaning expressed by the speaker.
- Be natural
- Restate what you have been told in simple terms.
- When restating, look for non-verbal as well as verbal cues that confirm or deny the accuracy of your paraphrasing.
- Note that some speakers may pretend you have got it right because they feel unable to assert themselves and disagree with you.

GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTING

- Do not question the speaker unnecessarily.
- Do not add to the speaker's meaning.
- Do not take the speaker's topic in a new direction.
- Always be non-directive and non-judgmental.

EXAMPLES OF REFLECTING

C: I don't really have an alcohol problem. I just have to manage all my anxiety when I'm at work.

CM: The real reason you drink is because you feel anxious at work.

CM: You're just doing what you feel you have to do to manage your anxiety.

C: I thought I might be eating too much sugar, but I haven't missed it for several days now.

CM: If you were eating too much sugar you would have missed it after this long.

CM: So far you haven't missed it at all!

PARAPHRASING AND AFFIRMING

Paraphrasing is essentially a collection of reflections strung together to connect, to clarify or “check in”, or to indicate we can transition to the next conversation. Paraphrasing shows the client that we’ve been paying attention/listening.

Affirmations are statements we make to show we notice something about our clients, perhaps what they are going through, or demonstrate our witnessing a strength.

HOW TO PARAPHRASE

- Case Managers should pay attention of what the client is saying.
- Case Managers has to choose which content is important when listening to what the client says.
- Re-express the content in your own words.
- Don't repeat word for word what the client said.
- Use appropriate words to paraphrase.

EXAMPLE OF PARAPHRASING

“ Let me see if I understand what brings you here today. You’ve come to see me hoping that we might be able to help you in court. The judge has said that you need to attend some classes here and get some counseling due to your recent hospitalization because you were hallucinating from being heavily intoxicated.”

EXAMPLES OF AFFIRMING

- “Your (courage, strength, determination, desire for change, etc.) shows by the steps you’re taking.”
- “You have a lot of (insight, willpower, guts).”
- “You’re determined to try to (make this change, be a better parent, focus on your studies, recover from this illness)”
- “You held up under enormous (pressure, stress, strain, anxiety, trauma); you really tried hard this week.”
- “By the way you handled that, you displayed a lot of.....”

CLARIFYING AND CLARIFICATION

In communication, clarification involves offering back to the speaker the essential meaning, as understood by the listener, of what they have just said. Thereby checking that the listener's understanding is correct and resolving any areas of confusion or misunderstanding.

THE PURPOSE OF CLARIFICATION

- Ensure that the listener's understanding of what the speaker has said is correct, reducing misunderstanding.
- Reassure the client that the case manager is genuinely interested in them and is attempting to understand what they are saying.
- As an extension of reflecting, clarifying reassures the client that the case manager is attempting to understand what the client is expressing.
- Clarifying can involve asking questions or occasionally summarizing what the client has said.

GUIDELINE FOR CLARIFYING

Your role is to assist a client to talk about an issue, often the most effective questioning starts with 'when', 'where', 'how', or 'why'. Admit if you are unsure about what the client means.

- Ask for repetition if needed.
- State what the client has said as you understand it, and check whether this is what they really said.
- Ask for specific examples.
- Use open-ended questions when needed. Open questions allow for a much longer responses and therefore potentially more creativity and information.
- Ask if you have got it right and be prepared to be corrected.

SUMMARIZING

Summaries are essentially a collection of reflections strung together to connect, to clarify or “check in”, or to indicate we can transition to the next conversation. Summarizing shows the client that we have been paying attention/listening.

SUMMARIZING IS A WAY TO

- Build rapport and engage a client
- Communicate interest in a client
- Move/transition
- Shift focus and attention
- Offer an invitation to alter/add/correct anything missed or misheard
- Reflect ambivalence (gains and losses)

WAYS TO BEGIN A SUMMARY

- “To summarize what we have been discussing....”
- “At this point you’ve said...”
- “You’ve said several things so far. Let me see if I’ve understood correctly.”
- “Let me see if I’ve got this right.”
- “You’ve mentioned several characteristics that could be helpful to your success making these changes.”

EXAMPLE OF A SUMMARY

"You're feeling quite overwhelmed by everything and that's led you to stop eating much plus you've been experiencing some withdrawal symptoms from not drinking. You are also wondering what your life would be like if you're expected to stop drinking because you've never been able to stop before. Finally you're concerned about how other will see you, that your friends will think you're "some kind of loser" now because you can't drink."

"Have I missed anything?"

"Where does that leave us now?"

"What are you thinking would be the best thing for you to do next?"

"What do you think you will do at this point?"



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