

# Active Listening Tips

One of the most important things you can do to help a colleague who is struggling is to listen to them. By listening and communicating openly and non-judgmentally, it will help the person feel understood. Once you have developed this rapport, you will be able to find ways to help and support them. Active listening means fully concentrating on what is being said and showing this to the person through verbal and non-verbal cues.



## NON-VERBAL signs of active listening



### No distractions

Focus on what the person is saying and don't get distracted by anything going on around you. Be sure to turn off your phone.



### Eye contact

Maintain a comfortable level of eye contact. Gauge how much eye contact is appropriate for the situation and the person you are talking to. Remember some cultures don't like direct eye contact so be mindful of this.



### Body language

The person's body language will give you clues as to how comfortable they are when talking with you and you may need to back off.



### Posture

Maintain an open body position. Don't cross your arms, as this may seem defensive. Lean slightly forward to show the person you are focusing on what they are saying.



### Position

If possible, sit down next to the person and angled towards them rather than directly opposite. Sitting opposite the person can sometimes feel confrontational.

## VERBAL signs of active listening



### Questions

Ask relevant questions that show you care and are trying to really understand what the person is saying to you.



### Summarise

Re-state what the person has said to check you have understood the facts and their feelings.



### Tone

Listen not only to what the person says but how they say it. This will help you understand how they are feeling.



### Prompts

Encourage the person to keep talking by saying minimal prompts such as, "I see" or "Ah", when necessary.



### Patience

If the person is talking about something that is making them emotional, they may start repeating themselves or speaking slower than usual. Be patient and give them time.



### Let them talk

Never interrupt the person when they are talking—especially not to share your own experiences or opinions. Sometimes silence is OK if the person is struggling to express themselves. Don't feel like you have to jump in!