

# Communication Skills

➤ **Active Listening: To “show” that we are listening without speaking.**

Shows that you are interested and listening  
Empowers the speaker to keep sharing

Looks like:

Eye contact, head nodding, facing the speaker, no distracting movements, uh huhs, and hmms.

➤ **Reflective Listening: To repeat back in your own words what you’ve understood in a concise, condensed form, highlighting the main points.**

Assures that you and the speaker are on the same page  
Helps focus the speaker Encourages further movement  
Shows you are interested and listening  
Allows confirmation that you do understand (or they will correct)  
Helps the speaker to clarify their own thoughts and feeling and grow in their own understanding  
Assures that everyone else could hear and understand the speaker’s point  
Affirms the speaker

Sounds like:

“So what I am hearing you say is...”  
“I heard...is that correct?”  
“Let me see if I understand...”

➤ **Clarifying Questions: To ask for more information, using open-ended questions, to better understand what the speaker is talking about.**

Helps you get a deeper understanding  
Encourages the speaker to explore the situation  
Begins the process of problem-solving

Sounds like:

“What does that mean?”  
“Tell me more about that.”  
“How did that make you feel?”

Cautions when asking questions:

1. Don’t ask a question that you already know the answer to – people can feel trapped/ caught.
2. Avoid using “why” questions – people may feel like they have to justify themselves. These can usually be replaced with “how” questions.
3. Make sure the question is related to the feeling and focus of the discussion and is not distracting. (i.e., Speaker says, “...and then on top of all that my car broke down!” Facilitator responds with distracting question, “What kind of car is it?”