
Checklist of Communication Strategies

- Warmth
- Attending – giving of undivided attention through eye contact, looking without staring, posture etc.
- Active Listening –
 1. Let go of own prejudices and conflicts
 2. Let go of judgments or disapproval
 3. Use of eyes and ears to detect messages, listen to tone, note posture, gestures, facial expressions and other non-verbal clues
 4. Listening for what gets left out of the dialogue
 5. Waiting through the silence and tears until they are ready to continue
 6. Looking at the person as they speak
 7. Accept the person although you may not condone their actions, beliefs, values etc.
- Responding
 1. Leading as in directing the conversation. Ask questions such ‘what happened next’, ‘tell me what you mean by...?’, ‘help me understand’
 2. Reflection – tells the person that you are trying to understand and are with them. ‘I imagine you must feel...’, ‘how frustrating for you...’. You may also summarise feelings or events or themes.
 3. Questioning – respectfully and carefully done. Can reveal a lot of useful information. ‘What sort of things make you unhappy?’ opens up a dialogue.
 4. Confronting – can present different ideas to the person without condemning them. This should be done in a non-judgmental, gentle manner
 5. Informing – give facts and information. Not too much, it can overwhelm when people are in pain. Relevant and timely is the key
 6. Supporting and encouraging.

Helpful listening skills

- Letting the other person speak freely for as long as they need
- Listening to everything that has been said before you respond
- Staying on the topic
- Answering questions honestly
- Accepting the impact that the event has had on the other without judging
- Gathering all the information before responding
- Being comfortable with silence
- Giving space just for the other person’s experience
- Maintaining eye contact and mirroring body image
- Empowering the other person to make their own decisions
- Empowering and encouraging the other person to follow through with their decisions

Unhelpful listening skills

- Interrupting
 - Thinking of a reply while the other person is still speaking
 - Changing the subject
 - Not answering questions
 - Minimizing a person’s experiences
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- Talking about your experiences instead
- Jumping to conclusions
- Filling in pauses or silences
- Fidgeting
- Giving advice
- Fixing the problem – doing ‘for’ rather than ‘with’

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