

LISTENING SKILLS

- 1) STOP TALKING! You can't listen while you are talking.
- 2) BE AWARE OF YOUR BODY LANGUAGE/NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION.

Smile, nod appropriately, maintain an "open" body position with arms and legs relaxed, and maintain eye contact.

- 3) CONCENTRATE ON THE SPEAKER

Pay attention to the speaker and think about what s/he is saying. Don't be looking around the room, checking the time, planning your response or wondering what you'll have for dinner.

- 4) LISTEN ON TWO LEVELS – CONTENT AND PROCESS

When we speak we usually talk on two levels. One is delivering facts and the other is about the feelings attached to the facts. The content is the "what", or the facts. The process is how the speaker is feeling about the facts. For full communication to occur the listener must receive both messages. Listen for what is not said as well as what is.

- 5) HEAR WITH AN OPEN MIND AND BE NONJUDGMENTAL

In order to really hear what is being said it is helpful to suspend your emotions, preconceived ideas and judgments and concentrate on the main ideas that are being delivered. Understanding and hearing does not necessarily mean you agree. Recognize your own prejudice and try to put it aside as you listen.

- 6) GIVE FEEDBACK

Give both verbal and nonverbal feedback to the speaker so s/he knows you are receiving the intended message.

- 7) CLARIFY

Ask questions if you don't understand a word, if a word may have several definitions and you're not sure which one is intended, or if what is being said makes no sense to you. Insure that you and the speaker are on the same page as the

conversation goes along.

8) BE RESPECTFUL

Listen fully and don't interrupt. Stay focused on the topic instead of taking it into other areas.

9) RESPOND

Let the speaker know you understand and are following him/her by responding with questions or comments, or paraphrasing what they have said.

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