



Understanding and Practicing Active Listening

Active listening is a communication technique developed by the American psychologist Carl Rogers.

It is based on the following principles:

- Openness to others, emotional availability, acknowledging another's presence
- Respect for the other person, their rhythm, their silences, their differences and their unique value, their ability to make their own decisions;
- The ability to listen with the heart and truly understand another's emotions;
- The authenticity to remain consistent between how we feel and what we reflect;

- Non-directive communication to strengthen the person's self-confidence and ability to understand themselves better;
- Also referred to as "benevolent" listening, active listening allows the person to feel understood and more autonomous and encourages them to find their own solutions.

We wish you pleasant reading and active listening!

Little Brothers



"When I have been listened to and when I have been heard, I am able to re-perceive my world in a new way and to go on. It is astonishing how elements which seem insoluble become soluble when someone listens. How confusions which seem irremediable turn into relatively clear flowing streams when one is heard."

Carl Rogers, humanist psychologist, creator of active listening, active, *On Becoming a Person*, InterEdition, 1966



Good practices

- Give the speaker your complete attention and listen mindfully;
- Create a climate of trust and security;
- Look the person in the eye;
- Focus on the person's non-verbal communication: the tone of their voice, the rate of speech, hesitations, intonation, etc.;
- Ensure understanding by asking open-ended questions. For example, by asking them what is bothering them;
- Reflect the person's feelings and verify them by reformulating their words. For example, by using the phrase "If I understand correctly, you are telling me that...";
- Remain neutral and communicate without passing judgment;
- Be patient and accept silences;
- Respect your own limits, practice self-kindness, refrain from judging yourself.



Attitudes to adopt

- Keep in mind that your attentive and compassionate listening make all the difference.
- Be patient, tolerant and tactful.
- As companions with Little Brothers or other organizations, do not hesitate to share your observations. Your coordinator can provide you with perspective and support for challenges you may encounter.
- As a caregiver, do not hesitate to consult organizations or professionals to help you provide appropriate support and create a secure network.
- Stay connected to your inner feelings and emotions and seek consultation if necessary.



Things to avoid

- Interrupting the person;
- Wanting to go forward and/or look for solutions in the person's place;
- Making judgments;
- Taking your companion's feelings on your shoulders.

Additional resources

Telephone

Écoute Entraide: 514 278-2130 or Toll free: 1 855 ONLINE (365 4463) (in French only)

Secours- Amitié Estrie : 819 564-2323

Online

Les Défis des Filles Zen, *L'écoute active au quotidien 4 clés et un défi*, [vidéo]

<https://bit.ly/ecoute-active> (in French only)

Readings

SALOMÉ Jacques, *Si je m'écoutais... je m'entendrais*, Éd. de l'Homme, 1990.

FLOYD James, *Vers une meilleure écoute*, Éd. Saint-Yves, 1988.

EGAN Gérard, *Communication dans la relation d'aide*, Éd. Études Vivantes, Montréal. 1987.

ADLER Ronald B., TOWNE Neil, *Communications et interactions*. Éd. Études Vivantes. 1991.