



ACTIVE LISTENING

Active Listening is a communication skill that involves fully engaging with the speaker and demonstrating understanding and empathy. It promotes effective communication, builds trust, and fosters positive relationships.

KEY COMPONENTS |

- **Paying Attention:** Give your full attention to the speaker, maintain eye contact, and eliminate distractions, if possible.
- **Verbal and Nonverbal Cues:** Use encouraging gestures, nodding, and facial expressions to show interest and understanding.
- **Clarifying and Summarizing:** Paraphrase and summarize what the speaker said to ensure accurate understanding and demonstrate active engagement.
- **Empathetic Response:** Show empathy by acknowledging the speaker's feelings and validating their experiences.
- **Avoiding Interruptions:** Allow the speaker to express their thoughts fully without interruption, allowing for a more meaningful exchange.
- **Providing Feedback:** Respond with thoughtful and relevant comments or questions that show your engagement with the speaker's message.
- **Stay Curious!**

STAFF

In a staff meeting, a team member actively listens by paraphrasing and summarizing key points made by colleagues, ensuring everyone's ideas are understood and acknowledged.

STUDENTS

During a student-teacher conference, the teacher actively listens by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and using reflective statements to show understanding and encourage the student to share their thoughts.

FAMILIES

During a parent-teacher conference, the teacher actively listens by providing empathetic responses, acknowledging the concerns and emotions expressed by the parent, and offering support and guidance.



IMPLEMENTATION TIPS |

- Create a conducive environment for active listening by minimizing distractions and ensuring privacy when engaging in important conversations.
- Practice attentive body language, such as maintaining eye contact, facing the speaker, and avoiding distracting behaviors.
- Use verbal cues, such as nodding, saying "yes," or using short affirming statements, to encourage the speaker to continue sharing their thoughts.
- Reflect back on what the speaker said by paraphrasing or summarizing their statements to confirm your understanding and demonstrate active engagement.
- Show empathy and validate the speaker's feelings by acknowledging their emotions and offering supportive comments.
- Avoid interrupting or interjecting your own thoughts while the speaker is talking, allowing them to express themselves fully. Remember, you are NOT trying to solve the problem, you are providing space to be a supportive listener.

FIDELITY CHECKLIST

The following tool can be used for self-assessment and/or non-evaluative learning walks (e.g., buddy observations, peer observations, coaching observations).

Date	Time		
FEATURE	NO	SOMETIMES	ALWAYS
Paying Attention: I give my full attention to the speaker, maintain eye contact, and eliminate distractions.			
Verbal/Non-Verbal Cues: I use gestures, nodding, and facial expressions to show interest and understanding.			
Clarifying & Summarizing: I paraphrase and summarize what the speaker said to ensure accurate understanding and active engagement.			
Empathetic Response: I acknowledge the speaker's feelings and validate their experiences.			
Avoiding Interruptions: I allow the speaker to express their thoughts or questions that show active engagement with the speaker's message.			

REFERENCES

- Bastable, E., Fairbanks Falcon, S., McDaniel, S. C., McIntosh, K., & Santiago-Rosario, M. R. (2021). Understanding educators' implementation of an equity-focused PBIS intervention: A qualitative study of critical incidents. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 23(4), 220-231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10983007211008847>
- Cook, C. R., Fiat, A., Larson, M., Daikos, C., Slemrod, T., Holland, E. A., Thayer, A. J., & Renshaw, T. (2018). Positive greetings at the door: evaluation of a low-cost, high-yield proactive classroom management strategy. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 20(3), 149-159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300717753831>
- Sandstrom, G. M. (2023). Even minimal student-instructor interactions may increase enjoyment in the classroom: Preliminary evidence that greeting your students may have benefits even if you can't remember their names. *PLoS ONE*, 18(8), e0288166. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0288166>
- Shields-Lysiak, L. K., Boyd, M. P., Iorio Jr., J. P., & Vasquez, C. R. (2020). Classroom greetings: more than a simple hello. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 8(3), 41-56. 10.30466/ijltr.2020.120933