

Active Listening Guide

Active listening is incredibly important if we want our loved ones to feel heard and understood. If we didn't have this modeled while growing up, it is something that we will need to learn during adulthood, and that's okay. You've got this!

Listen well with these four steps:

1. Listen, *really listen* to what they're saying

Show you are listening with good eye contact and your body turned towards them. Then paraphrase back what you're hearing them say. For example, "So you're saying that..." or "What I'm hearing you say is that..." This helps the two of you get on the same page about what is bothering them.

2. Ask questions for clarification

Ask at least 2-3 questions to deepen your understanding about what they're saying. Once you have asked those, then ask, "Am I getting it?" or "Is there more I need to know?"

3. Choose at least one thing to validate

You can validate even a small part of what they are describing. Remember, you don't have to *agree* with someone to validate their experience. This is their experience.

Validating Statements:

"It makes sense that you would feel _____, especially since _____."

"I can see why you felt that way." (Then explain **how** you can see that.)

"So you're saying that you felt _____ when I _____.
I totally get that." (And then explain **how** you get it.)

4. Apologize if needed. What part of this can you need to take ownership for?

Is there anything you did that caused them hurt, pain, or confusion?

If so, apologize and *be specific*. What are you sorry for doing? Why are you sorry?