

Transcript for Listening

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Effective... Empathic... Active... Careful... Respectful... Attentive... Interactive... Focused...
Reflective...

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Seek first to understand... ...then to be understood.

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Hi. I'm Philip Moses and I'm Anita Engiles. Welcome to CADRE's presentation on Listening. CADRE, as you may know, is the national technical assistance center for dispute resolution in special education.

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Our objective here is to assist viewers to better understand the three critical elements of listening: keeping the focus on the other person; listening with care and empathy; and demonstrating understanding. How these key aspects of listening are used, of course, depends on respectful consideration of culture, language and values.

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All of us have had the experience of being misunderstood. Hopefully, all of us have had the experience of being heard and understood. And we have all listened carefully to someone else in order to understand what is important to that person. This video will help viewers recognize the importance and value of effective listening. Viewers will also better understand and use the skills involved in listening.

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Let's begin with one definition of listening. Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages.

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Listening involves far more than simply hearing. It is a highly interactive and vital part of human communication.

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Think for a moment of a time when you really felt heard and understood. What did that person do that gave you that experience? How was that person interacting with you?

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So why would you decide to listen in this way? are you a parent? a teacher? a leader? Someone who is asked to respond to people who are emotional, demanding or asking for your opinion? Lets take a look at some of the specific benefits that effective listening offers.

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If you experienced being heard, that person was probably caring, respectful, patient and focused only on what you were saying. That person likely also put aside his or her own needs for that moment.

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Listening well requires paying attention. It requires following the thoughts and feelings of another person, to understand what that person is saying, from his or her unique perspective or point of view. Even with caring and focused attention, a speaker will not feel understood until the listener demonstrates understanding.

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An attentive listener can provide a safe and caring environment for a speaker to vent anger, frustration or other emotions. Sometimes people just need to be heard and have their experience acknowledged.

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An attentive listener helps a speaker to communicate what he or she thinks is important. As the conversation continues, the speaker is able to sort out important issues and explore areas of uncertainty.

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Disagreements can be based on misunderstandings that attentive listening can correct. Reflective listening lets you check for accuracy in your understanding and can help clarify information, facts or data. People want their experience, needs or requests to be understood.

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Additionally, attentive listening creates the possibility that a speaker who feels understood may be more motivated to listen to you. In simple terms, people are more likely to listen to you after you listen to them.

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An attentive listener encourages the speaker to shift to deeper levels of expression and reach for the heart of the matter.

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Attentive listening helps the speaker to more effectively explore options and create solutions.

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Once you have decided to listen attentively, what skills will you use? Listening skills can be organized into two groups: Attending skills and Responding skills.

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Attending skills create a welcoming and warm atmosphere. Consider: Using open and receptive body posture and hand gestures. Noticing the physical space between listener and speaker, direct or indirect eye contact and touch. Demonstrating interest and caring, through words and silence. Using response such as, "uh huh," "yeah," or nodding, to encourage a speaker to continue.

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Responding skills communicate to the speaker that we are hearing and understanding what he or she is saying. One way to let someone know you are listening is to reflect back- in your own words- naturally and authentically, what you are hearing.

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What you reflect back may include either the thoughts of the speaker, Anita: "So you're unclear about who will be at the meeting, right?" The feelings of the speaker, Anita: "You seem frustrated because no one is returning your phone calls." Or both thoughts and feelings, Anita: "I am understanding that you don't know how to prepare for the meeting and that's frustrating." Summarizing what you have heard and checking for accuracy helps the speaker move to a deeper level or move on to other important topics or thoughts.

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Listening is a key ingredient in any environment where people are solving problems, resolving disputes or negotiating agreements. This is true whether in a casual conversation, IEP meeting, resolution meeting or mediation. "Listening is probably the most cost effective element of a conflict management system."

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Listening demonstrates respect for and honors the dignity of the speaker. To do this, a listener keeps the focus on the speaker, attends with empathy and care, and ensures that the speaker feels understood. "True listening is a gift and privilege for the speaker...and the listener".

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Remember the three most important aspects of listening, keeping the focus on the other person, listening with care and empathy, and demonstrating understanding.

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Thank you for taking part in this short course on "Listening". We hope you will also take advantage of additional resources at the CADRE website and let CADRE know if we can assist you with your future training needs.