

# Ten Skills for Empathetic Listening

- 1. Attending or Acknowledging:** Providing verbal or nonverbal awareness of the other person
  - Make eye contact.
  - “Ah ah...”
  - “Yes, I see...”
- 2. Restating or Paraphrasing:** Responding to a person’s basic verbal message
  - “So you think that...”
  - “If I understand you correctly...”
  - “Let me try to summarize what I think you are telling me...”
- 3. Reflecting:** Reflecting feelings, experiences or content that has been heard or perceived through cues.
  - “So you felt...”
  - “I can tell that you are feeling...”
  - “It seems like a very difficult situation...”
- 4. Interpreting:** Offering a tentative interpretation about the other person’s feelings, desires or meanings.
  - “It seems to me like you are...”
  - “So you would like to resolve the conflict in the simplest way possible by...”
  - “You mean you want...”
- 5. Summarizing, Synthesizing:** Bringing together in some way feelings and experiences; providing focus.
  - “From everything you are telling me, I can tell you are...”
  - “So your main issue is...”
  - “You have identified these issues for me...”
- 6. Probing:** Questioning in a supportive way that requests more information or that attempts to clear up confusions.
  - “I want to make sure I’ve got this straight...”
  - “To help me better tell your story, can I put those events in the correct order?”
- 7. Giving Feedback:** Sharing perceptions of the other person’s ideas or feelings; disclosing relevant personal information.
  - “I would feel the same way...”
  - “I have been through a similar experience...”
  - “It’s understandable that you feel...”
- 8. Supporting:** Showing warmth and caring in your own way.
  - “It’s great that you called us...”
  - “You’ve been through a lot, and I’m going to do my best to get you the right help.”
  - “You did the right thing by reporting it...”
- 9. Checking Perceptions:** Finding out if the person’s interpretations and perceptions are valid and accurate.
  - “Did someone else witness this event?”
  - “How do you know how long it took?”
  - “Are other people affected the same way?”
- 10. Being Quiet:** Giving the other person time to think as well as to talk
  - “Can you think of anything else?”
  - Pause between questions.
  - Let the other person finish his/her thoughts and sentences