

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

The goal of active listening is to discover the person's actual feelings and the "why" of the conversation. By truly understanding the person's feelings you really say to that person, "I care about you; even if we don't agree, your comments and feelings are real. I accept you as you are."

Techniques to Achieve Active Listening

- Accept what the person is saying or feeling. Look for the feelings underneath the actual words.
- Clarify what you think the person is saying/feeling by:
 - restating or paraphrasing what the other person has said
 - checking your perceptions of the situation with the other person
- Probe for the person's own clarification of the situation.

Results of Active Listening

- The person feels your care and concern.
- Feelings could change during the conversation.
- Misunderstanding can be clarified.
- Self-understanding is promoted.

How to Achieve Active Listening

- Encourage reminiscence. Reminiscing is a way of reliving, re-experiencing or savoring events that are/were personally significant.
- Reminiscence is therapeutic because it:
 - reinforces a sense of identity and maintains self-esteem
 - gives a sense of achievement and pleasure
 - helps a person cope with stresses related to the aging process
 - gives a person status by revealing selected elements of their life history
 - builds a bridge between past experiences and the present
- Use "open" questions about their family, birthplace, hobbies etc.
- Examples of questions would be:
 - what hobbies have you had?
 - are you from a large family?
 - did you like school?
 - what have you wanted to do but not had time to do?