

Engaged Listening

Silence – Stop talking. This seems obvious, but we cannot really listen to another if we are talking.

Eye contact – Making appropriate eye contact demonstrates concern and interest. Overly aggressive eye contact, however, can be intimidating. Respond to the non-verbal cues of the speaker.

Observe body language – Is the speaker anxious, excited, sad, joyful, etc.

Encouragement – Offer encouragement for the speaker to continue his/her story by nodding and making non-judgmental sounds of affirmation.

Patience – Allow for silence, give the speaker time to gather his/her thoughts and to craft the story as they speak.

Probe – Ask open-ended questions to encourage further narrative, not for the sake of criticizing or judging.

Clarify – Check for understanding. If something is unclear, ask.

Empathize – Imagine how the speaker feels, but don't assume you *know* how the speaker feels.

Habits to avoid:

Interrupting

Assuming you know the story

Assuming you understand how the other person feels

Making moral judgments

Becoming impatient, angry, or anxious if the other person's story is not what you expect

Making the story about you

Planning your response while the speaker is still talking

