


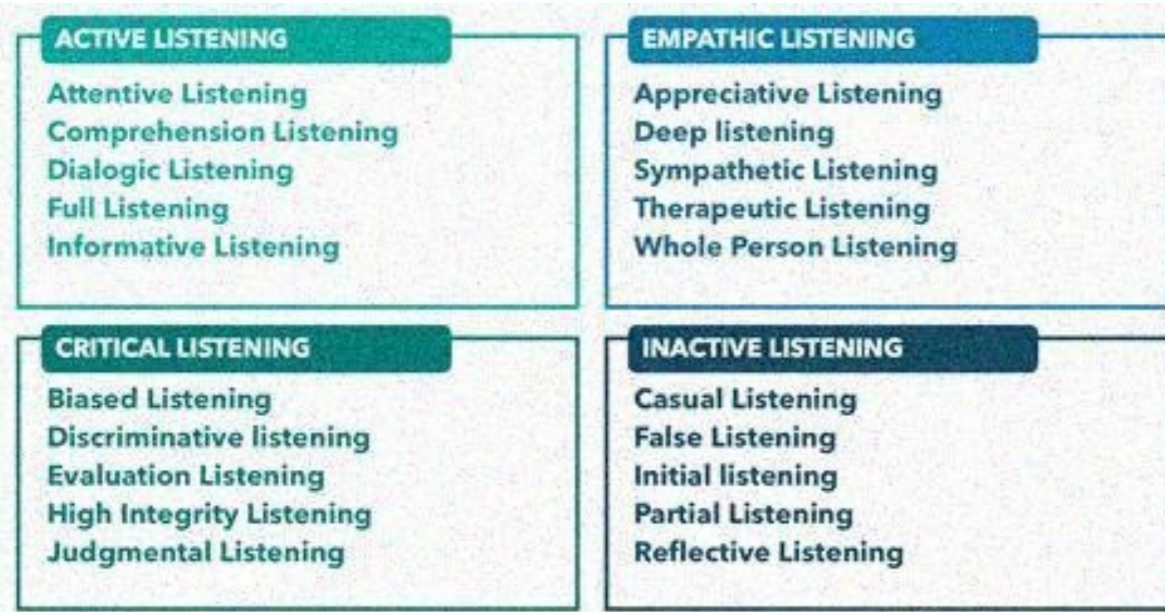
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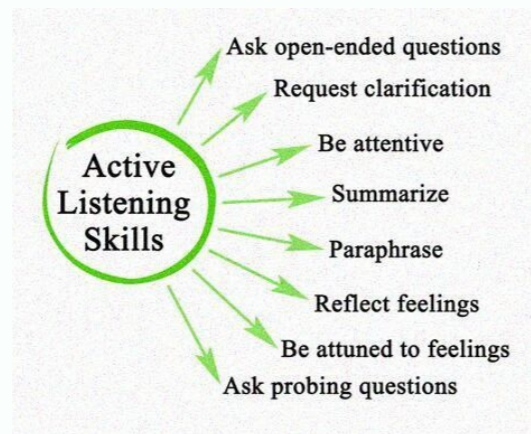
## Active listening dialogue examples

### Active listening examples. Active listening conversation examples.

Active listening is at the heart of client-centered counseling and, once mastered, offers a powerful tool, valuable in our professional work, relationships, and personal lives (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). When done well, active listening builds and maintains therapeutic alliances and bonds by showing empathy and creating opportunities for healing and growth. By reflecting back the emotions we hear, the client experiences messages of support and encouragement to continue their therapeutic journey. In counseling, therapy, and coaching, active listening is one of the most potent tools for improving in-session dynamics, overturning unhelpful mindsets, and supporting transformation. Before you continue, we thought you might like to download our three Positive Communication Exercises (PDF) for free. These science-based tools will help you and those you work with build better social skills and better connect with others. What Is Active Listening? Richard Nelson-Jones (2014) says we should recognize the difference between hearing and listening. While hearing involves receiving sounds and interpreting their meaning, listening involves accurately understanding their meaning. Listening goes beyond hearing and committing words to memory by becoming aware and sensitive to nonverbal communication, such as the speaker's tone of voice, timing, speed of talking, body language, and context. Active listening can be summed up as entailing "not only accurately understanding speaker's communication but also showing that understanding" and therefore embodies the skills of both the sender and the receiver (Nelson-Jones, 2014, p. 79). It can also be helpful to consider what active listening isn't (Miller & Rollnick, 2013): Commanding Warning Lecturing Judging Blaming Shaming Analyzing Probing Humoring Distracting Rather than examples of listening, each is a roadblock that gets in the way of the client's self-exploration. The counselor, therapist, colleague, friend, and even loved one is saying, "Hold up, listen to me. I know best" (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The relationship with the client should take place within an egalitarian, nonhierarchical relationship, "with neither party occupying a 'one-up' or 'one-down' position in terms of status or authority" (Adams, 2016, p. 13). Ultimately, the collaborative alliance must be fostered and maintained to allow goals, aspirations, fears, and plans to be worked through together. What Is Empathetic Listening? While both active and empathetic listening involve giving our full attention, the latter places particular attention on understanding the other person's emotional experience. Accurate empathy is a helpful tool for facilitating self-exploration and, when used for communication within therapy or the workplace, can be game changing (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; Engel, 2018). Simply put, empathetic listening involves reflecting back the emotions we hear; for example, "You sound angry and upset." It shows understanding, encouraging the speaker to share more by validating them without judgment. Ultimately, it requires us to suspend our biases and ego, showing that we are listening to understand rather than reply (Engel, 2018). For someone telling important truths about how they feel or sharing the experiences they are going through, nothing hurts more than not being heard. Communicating empathically requires vulnerability for both the speaker and listener. Honest, open communication means the speaker leaves themselves open to challenge or ridicule. It is not all one-sided; the listener may also feel some of their hurt and pain. These detailed, science-based exercises will equip you or your clients with tools to improve communication skills and enjoy more positive social interactions with others. Why Is Active Listening as a Skill Important? "Behind the discipline of good listening is a trust that it is useful for clients to explore their own experience and perceptions" (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 49). Ultimately, it keeps people going, motivating them to enter uncomfortable areas of conversation and work through difficult material. Listening occurs in four different contexts within counseling sessions (Nelson-Jones, 2014): Counselor listens to the therapist. Client listens to the counselor. Counselor listens to himself. Client listens to himself. If someone is listening poorly or focusing too much on themselves, they will miss out on much of what is being communicated. On the other hand, listening well, actively, to the other person can equally enhance their inner listening (Nelson-Jones, 2014).



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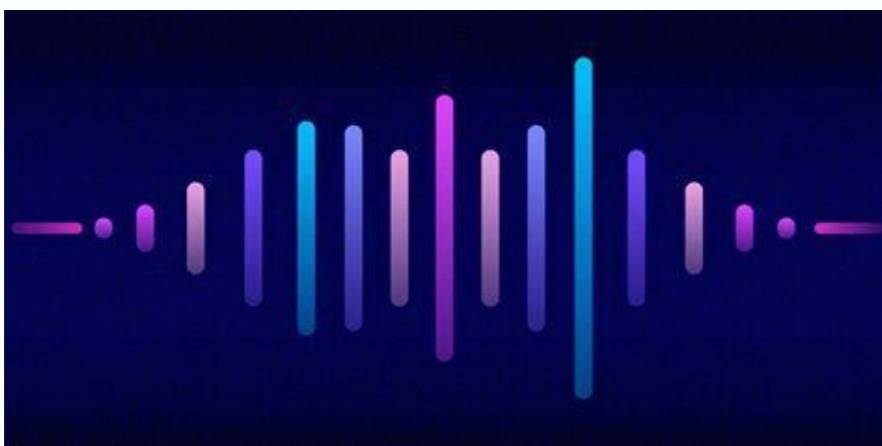


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- May I (please)...?
- Can I... (please)?
- Would I be able to...?
- Do you mind if I...?
- Do you think I should...?
- What do you think if I...?
- I think I'm going to... Is that ok?
- What do you say about...?
- Don't mind if I do!



By reflecting back the emotions we hear, the client experiences messages of support and encouragement to continue their therapeutic journey.



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