

TECHNIQUES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is an important skill that takes both time and practice to acquire. It is an essential component of productive discussions because it allows for the respectful exchange of ideas. This handout will help you to understand and practice the skill.

- » **Listen** in order to fully understand what is being said to you.
- » **Rephrase** what you heard the person say so you can be sure you heard correctly.
- » **Ask questions** that help you get more information. For example, "What did you mean when you said...?"
- » **Offer encouragement and support.**
- » **Ask how the person feels.** Be careful not to assume that you know how the person feels.

COMMUNICATION BLOCKERS	COMMUNICATION ENHANCERS
Blaming and attacking.	Asking for more information and problem solving together.
Being distracted or using other body language that is non-attentive.	Making eye contact, leaning toward the other person, giving full attention.
Dismissing or making light of someone's problem.	Showing empathy, validating the other person's feelings.
Interrupting.	Staying silent until the person is finished speaking.
Lecturing/moralizing.	Withholding judgment.
"Yes...but" statements.	"Yes...and" statements.

Explanation and Diagram adopted from *Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace* Teachers Guide, a production of Wisdom Works, Inc. (www.wisdomworks.net)