

# LISTENING SKILLS

**Active Listening:** This is the process of restating or paraphrasing what you have just heard without interpretation.

*What I hear you saying is...  
Do you mean...*

**Open-ended questions:** Communicates to the Peer/Person that you are interested in hearing about his/her experience. These are questions that elicit descriptive responses versus yes/no answers. Allows the individual to speak freely about thoughts or feelings and encourages exploration.

WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS WHEN...

*Tell me more about ...*

**Clarifying Questions:** Helps you to gain a fuller understanding of the Peer/Person's experience. The purpose of this is not to learn the details of the event but to assist you in understanding the caller's needs and how you can help.

*Is there anything else I you can tell me to help me better understand what this means for you?*

**Encouragers:** Simple statements or phrases that let the caller know that you are listening.

*Please go on.  
It's okay.  
I hear what you are saying.  
Um hum.*

**Feedback:** A way of pulling together a series of disjointed thoughts or communicating an interpretation after listening is to.

*Peer/Person describes the event and the aftereffects in detail, tearfully.  
You: It sounds like this has been very difficult for you*

**Reframing:** A tool for assisting the peer/person in the beginning to understand something in a different light and/or integrate new knowledge.

*I know that this experience has been very difficult for you and has transformed your life but you are now using your experience to reach out and help others...*

Normalizing: It helps to break the isolation that the individual may feel as they share their personal experience with you. It helps the peer/ person to realize that his/her feelings are not unusual and that he/she will be able to work through their pain & trauma.

*It is not unusual to have that kind of response...  
It is normal to feel (angry, betrayed, sad, etc.) after an experience of this kind*