

Rules for Good Listening

Stop Talking

If you are talking, you can't be listening. Silence from us often encourages or gives others permission to speak.

Make This a Safe Experience

Put the individual at ease as much as possible. Accept their point of view and feelings, and try to use your story to validate what they are now experiencing.

Show Them You Are Listening

Look interested, listen, to understand their story. Don't assume their experiences will parallel yours exactly. We know that everyone's situation in their journey is different. Make comfortable eye contact, nod and use other listening skills to connect with them and assure them that they are being heard.

Avoid Distractions

Don't allow interruptions or distractions that pull you both away from sharing information support. Help keep the focus on topics of importance, not idle chit-chat.

Use Empathy

Remember your own experience to try to understand their points of view. Even when their perceptions are different accept them as valid for that person. Try to communicate this acceptance and understand by your attitude and speech.

Don't Hurry

Don't interrupt, and don't seem in a hurry to leave or move on to the next topic. Make the individual feel "special", especially in those who are attending the meeting for the first time and are newly diagnosed.

Listen Without Judgment

Be prepared to hear and feel any and all emotions. REMEMBER: All feelings are appropriate and worthy of respect, even if you don't understand or agree with them.

Don't Argue or Criticize

Heightened emotions can cause feelings and words to seem irrational. The responsibility is on you to maintain calm acceptance of all their feelings as matters are discussed.

Ask Good Questions

Ask open-ended questions to show that you are listening and to encourage more self-exploration.