

Storyteller Season

Facilitators' Resources

Some helpful hints on "Listening" for information

- Maintain Eye Contact with the person speaking – You will have to take notes, however, keeping eye contact tells the person speaking that you are interested and are listening. Jot notes and come back afterwards to fill in more details.
- Avoid Emotional Involvement – You do not have to defend anyone. You are just there to listen. When you become emotionally involved in the listening, you tend to form "rebuttal" remarks in your mind and hear what you want to hear. Try to remain objective and open-minded.
- Avoid distractions – Give your full attention to the person speaking. Try not to form responses to their comments. Avoid looking around the room or out the window.
- Stay focused – Your mind might wander if you assume you know what the person is going to say next. If you feel your mind wandering away from the speakers' words, change the position of your body and concentrate.
- Let the Speaker finish before you begin to talk. You are there to listen. When you interrupt, it appears you are not listening, even if you are. Ask questions to encourage more information not to challenge the speaker or to confront.
- Let yourself finish thinking before you begin to speak. You can't really listen if you are busy thinking about what you are going to say.
- Listen for Main Ideas. Many speakers will have stories to illustrate their main point. Listen for the main idea and repeat that back to the speaker at the appropriate time.
- Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand what the speaker has said, ask. Try to keep the question open and for clarification. Stating the main idea or asking them to elaborate is sometimes helpful. Keep the questions open ended.
- Let there be silence. Avoid filling the silence with your thoughts. Let that silent time be a place where the speakers can gather their thoughts.
- Give Feedback. Sit up straight and look directly at the speaker. Nod or give appropriate responses to indicate that you are listening. Watch your body language.

From "Be an Effective Listener" by Dianne Schilling

Ten Steps to Effective Listening

1. Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.
2. Be attentive yet relaxed.
3. Keep an open mind.
4. Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
5. Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions".
6. Wait for the speaker to pause before asking clarifying questions.
7. Ask questions only to ensure understanding of something that has been said. (avoiding questions that disrupt the speaker's train of thought)
8. Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.
9. Give the speaker regular feedback, e.g., summarize, reflect feelings, or simply say "uh huh."
10. Pay attention to what isn't said - to feelings, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and other nonverbal cues.

