

ACTIVE LISTENING GUIDELINES

- **Empathize.** Put yourself in the other person's place to understand what that person is saying and how he or she feels.
- **Be Attentive.** Make an effort to listen carefully. Don't daydream or talk when someone else is talking.
- **Show understanding and acceptance by nonverbal behaviors.**
 - Tone of voice
 - Facial expressions
 - Gestures
 - Eye contact
 - Posture
- **Reflect back** the person's most important thoughts and feelings. Try to do this in your own words. Paraphrase or restate while being careful to say only what you heard.
- **Do not interrupt, offer advice, or give suggestions.** Do not bring up similar feelings and problems from your own experience. Leave out your personal emotions, disagreements, opinions, and other feedback (unless you are asked for it).
- **Remain neutral.** Don't take sides.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Ask for clarification but be polite and respectful. For example, ask "Can you say more about that?" or "What did you mean when you said...?"