

1) What is listening? On an informational front, effective listening gives people access to others' beliefs, knowledge, objectives, and attitudes, in part because people disclose information more readily and effectively to those who listen well. As a result, effective listening may help individuals better understand the context in which their influence attempts transpire, thereby enabling them to tailor their persuasive behavior to that context. Second, effective listening can also have important relational benefits. When people feel 'listened to' by would-be agents of influence their liking for, commitment to, and trust in the agents tend to increase, thereby expanding the agents' influence power. When it comes to the field of counseling and psychotherapy listening is a crucial skill. Many a therapist/ counselor think that because they are trained in counseling/therapy they have more knowledge than their clients; however, the blatant truth is that client is the expert on his or her own life. Therefore it's important for a counselor to listen so that he or she not only understand the words, but the underlying message of what someone is saying. Are there different types of listening/listeners then? Typically, researchers separate listeners into three or four specific types or levels. All systems are slightly different in how they separate listeners but all offer a continuum from non-listeners to very deep listeners. Newkirk and Linden (1982) present a system that examines three specific listening types: time wasters, dissonance reducers and active listeners. Hunsaker and Alessandra (1986) put listeners in one of four general categories, according to the depth of concentration and sensitivity on the part of the listener. The four types are: the non-listener, marginal listener, evaluative listener, and the active listener. As we move from the first, through the fourth the potential for understanding, trust and effective communication increases. The highest and most effective level of listening is the active listening (Hunsaker and Alessandra, 1986; Newkirk and Linden, 1982). Active listening is a communication technique that increases understanding and rapport between speaker and listener. Rather than passively listening to the speaker (or not listening at all), the active listener pays close attention to both verbal and body language, then repeats back the most important points of the speaker's message. Active listening requires that we listen not only for the content of the speaker's message, but more importantly, for the intent and feeling of the message as well. The active listener shows the listener, both verbally and nonverbally that they are truly interested and listening. They are usually skillful questioners, but never interrupt and are always looking for verbal and visual cues that signify the other person has something to say. Research has found that by listening effectively, you will get more information from the people you manage, you will increase others' trust in you, and you will reduce conflict, you will better understand how to motivate others, and you will inspire a higher level of commitment in the people you manage. Active Listening Techniques There are several active listening techniques which assist people in utilizing their listening time to its fullest extent. According to Newkirk and Linden (1982) some of these techniques are: paraphrasing, reflection, neutral technique, clarifying and summarization. 1. Paraphrasing: when the listener restates in his own words what the speaker means. This is very valuable in testing the whether the listener really understood what the speaker meant and also to let the speaker know they are being actively listened to. 2. Reflection: is slightly different from paraphrasing; here the focus is primarily on how the speaker felt, than the content of the message. This is particularly important when the speaker expresses strong feelings. 3. Neutral technique: encourages the speaker to continue talking. A simple nod of head or a "uh-huh" are usually

effective signals that the listener is interested and listening. Summarization: Involves combining the speaker's thoughts into a concise statement which focuses on the speaker's key points. Skills that Active Listeners Possess Hunsaker and Alessandra (1986) discuss three additional, very important skills that only active listeners possess. They are sensing, attending and responding. Sensing is the ability to recognize and appreciate the silent messages that the speaker is sending; that is facial expressions, intonation and body language. Attending refers to the verbal, vocal and visual messages that the active listener sends back to the speaker acknowledging the speaker and their message. This also establishes a receptive listening setting, away from distractions, private without invading the speaker's "personal space." Listening is defined as a form of communication that involves hearing, interpreting, and constructing meanings; an active process that is not limited to the spoken word; and an essential way of participating in daily routines as well as wider decision-making processes. A study of over 8,000 people employed in businesses, hospitals, universities, the military and government agencies found that virtually all of the respondents believed that they communicate as effectively as or more effectively than their co-workers. It includes interpreting and is an ACTIVE PROCESS not a PASSIVE ONE at that. It involves HIGHER MENTAL PROCESSES like planning, meaning making, decision making etc. But, in fact, listening effectively is something that very few of us can do. It's not that it's hard, but it's just that we haven't (or chose not to) developed it enough. Are listening and hearing one and the same or are they two different things? Are you a Good Listener? So in simple words— 1. It's MORE than HEARING. 2. 3.