

# Two–Minute Tips

## This Week's Topic: Active Listening

Active listening is one way to build relationships. The relationships we build with participants is the foundation for learning. Authentic relationships are developed through communication. When we think of communication, we often think of talking, but listening is a critical element of communication as well.

Active listening builds empathy. Empathy is the ability to think about things from another's perspective, to recognize emotions in others, and to appropriately respond to other's emotions.<sup>1</sup> Empathy is an important skill because it helps us navigate social problem-solving, build relationships, manage our own and other's emotions, and avoid unnecessary conflict. Developing empathy is important not only in the social realm, it supports our academic and job performance too.<sup>2</sup>

## Practice Tips

Here are a few quick tips on active listening.

### Non-Verbal Communication

Make eye contact, stay focused, be patient, smile, nod your head, position your body toward the speaker, uncross your legs and arms, get on their level, allow for silence.

### Ask Open-Ended Questions

Ask questions in a way that requires more than a yes or no answer, encourage conversation, and invite the speaker to say more.

### Encourage

Use statements like, "Can you tell me more about that?" This helps convey interest and encourages the speaker to keep talking.

### Summarize

Paraphrase what you hear them say to make sure you understand correctly. It also helps the speaker feel heard and encourages them to open up.

### Clarify

Ask follow-up questions to clarify what the speaker said or meant. This promotes understanding and helps you get more information.

### Validate

Acknowledge their feelings, perspective, and thoughts on what they're sharing with you. You can also show appreciation for their efforts, actions, or decisions to open themselves up with you.

### Give Undivided Attention

Make sure your phone is put away or silenced and you're making eye contact with the person who is speaking to you.

## Tips in Action!

[Watch](#) more on active listening! See staff from Village Theater lead a reflection activity using active listening techniques.

## Want more two-minute tips?

Check out:

<https://depts.washington.edu/cqel/expanded-learning-opportunities/>

There you will find the latest tip, an archive of past tips, and a discussion board to connect with peers!

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<sup>1</sup> Melbourne Child Psychology & School Psychology Services. (2018). *How to help teenagers develop empathy*. Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from <https://www.melbournechildpsychology.com.au/blog/help-teenagers-develop-empathy/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.