



Quality listening reduces anxiety, improves satisfaction, enhances compliance and has been correlated with improved health outcomes.

## What is Active Listening?

When a listener intentionally uses body language, tone of voice and word choices to help a speaker feel heard and understood.

## Essential Ingredients:

**Empathy** is understanding, being aware of and sensitive to the feelings and emotions of your patients/clients or a family member.

*“It sounds like you’re feeling.....is that right?”*

**Respect** can be shown by hearing the patient and allowing them to express their thoughts thoroughly without interruption.

*“What do I need to know about you that will help me take care of you?”*

**Presence** is being attentive to the needs of a patient/client or family member and offering your whole self to be with them in that moment.

*“I’m just going to sit here quietly with you for a moment if that’s okay.”*

# Active Listening Techniques

<b>Pay attention</b>	focus solely on the patient/client, listen to their body language as well as their non-verbal signs - like pauses or facial expression.
<b>Show you are listening</b>	tilt your head slightly when listening, nod appropriately, smile when appropriate, and encourage the speaker to continue.
<b>Provide feedback</b>	reflect what is being said by paraphrasing, asking questions to clarify and summarizing comments to validate that the message has been understood.
<b>Respond when appropriate</b>	allow the speaker to finish speaking without interrupting or formulating your response while the patient/client is still speaking.
<b>Defer judgment</b>	aim to gain information and perspective without jumping to conclusions, treat the speaker as you would wish to be treated.

## The Benefits of Active Listening:

- Helps you learn more from the conversation.
- Helps the speaker be certain that he or she is understood.
- Encourages the speaker share information that may be crucial to outcomes.
- Fosters empathy.
- Builds rapport.
- Helps to establish trust and credibility.
- Validates and helps to de-escalate strong feelings and emotions.



This PFCC tool adapted for Primary Health Care from AHS Engagement & Patient Experience. References:

Brown, P. & Yessis, J. (2008). Listening for excellence in patient-centered care. *NRC Picker Quarterly White Paper*. Retrieved from <http://www.nrcpicker.com/testimonials-resources/resources/>  
Simpson, M., Buckman, R., Stewart, M., Maguire, P., Lipkin, M., Novack, D., & Till, J. (1991). Doctor-patient communication: The Toronto consensus statement. *British Medical Journal*, 303(6814), 1385-1387. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1671610/>