

## Active Listening

Prepare with a positive, engaged attitude

- Focus your attention on the subject  
Stop all non-relevant activities beforehand to orient yourself to the speaker or the topic
- **Review mentally what you already know about the subject**  
Organize in advance relevant material in order to develop it further  
(previous lectures, TV programs, newspaper articles, web sites, prior real life experience, etc.)
- **Avoid distractions**  
Seat yourself appropriately close to the speaker  
Avoid distractions (a window, a talkative neighbor, noise, etc.)
- **Acknowledge any emotional state**  
Suspend emotions until later, or  
Passively participate unless you can control your emotions
- **Set aside your prejudices, your opinions**  
You are present to learn what the speaker has to say, not the other way around

## Actively listen

- **Be other-directed; focus on the person communicating**  
Follow and understand the speaker as if you were walking in their shoes  
Listen with your ears but also with your eyes and other senses
- **Be aware: non-verbally acknowledge points in the speech**  
Let the argument or presentation run its course  
Don't agree or disagree, but encourage the train of thought
- **Be involved:**  
Actively respond to questions and directions  
Use your body position (e.g. lean forward) and attention to encourage the speaker and signal your interest

## Follow up activities

### One-to-one

**Give the speaker time and space**  
for rest after talking

**Express appreciation** for the sharing  
to build trust and encourage

### In a group/audience

**Give the speaker space to regroup,**  
to debrief after talking

**During Q & A**

dialogue

### Check if you have understood

- **Restate**  
key points to affirm your understanding  
& build dialogue
- **Summarize**  
key points to affirm your understanding  
& build dialogue
- **Ask (non-threatening) questions**  
to build understanding

### Continue dialogue:

- **Reflect on your experience**  
to demonstrate your interest  
(feedback)
- **Interpret**  
after you feel you have  
grasped content
- **Apply what you have learned**  
to a new situation

### If posing a question

- Quickly express appreciation
- Briefly summarize a preliminary point
- Ask the relevant question

### If making a point

- **Quickly express appreciation**
- **Briefly restate the relevant idea**  
as presented
- **State your idea, interpretation, reflection**
- **Invite a response**

### Continued development

- **Get contact information**  
for later reference
- **Invite friends/colleagues/etc.**  
for discussion afterward
- **Write out a summary with questions**  
for further review