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 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 or family member & 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.”

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

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