



How Can I Become a Better Listener?

While it takes time and effort to develop good listening skills, the more practice you put in, the more adept you'll become.

Here are some important steps to consider:

LISTEN

Genuinely listen, with your ears and your heart. Don't plan what to say next, and resist the urge to interrupt.

SHOW YOUR INTEREST IN WHAT'S BEING SAID

If you smile at the speaker, nod occasionally and offer small verbal comments such as 'yes' or 'uh huh', they will feel encouraged to continue.

PAY ATTENTION TO NON-VERBAL MESSAGES

Observe the speaker's tone of voice and body language as these can give clues to what they're thinking and feeling. Your own body language should indicate that you're interested in the other person and help encourage them to speak. Try to keep your body relaxed and stay focused on the speaker. Avoid distracting behaviour, such as tapping your fingers.

KEEP THE FOCUS ON THE OTHER PERSON

Sometimes when people seem to be listening, they're really just waiting for the other person to stop talking so they can dive into their own story. The speaker can usually sense this and it doesn't help to make them feel cared for and understood. In fact, it can undermine an exploration of their feelings.



REFRAME IMPORTANT MESSAGES

Try to process the information you're hearing and summarise it using your own words. For instance, if someone is telling you about a family problem, you might say, "So things have reached a point at home where communication has broken down and you're feeling pretty upset about it?" Reframing what the speaker is saying in this way helps them feel understood. It implies empathy and suggests that you are seeing the world from their point of view. They may in turn feel more willing to understand you too.

DO NOT GIVE ADVICE

It's understandable that you may want to immediately give advice and 'fix' the other person's problem, but resist the urge to do so. While you may have the best of intentions, what would work for you might not work for them, and you may come across as being condescending. Unless they ask you directly for advice, the other person may just want to feel heard and understood.

TRY TO SET ASIDE JUDGEMENT

You don't have to like the person you're trying to communicate with, or agree with their ideas, values or opinions. But if you want to understand them, you need to set aside your judgment and withhold criticism and blame. Even the most difficult encounters can lead to better relationships if you communicate well.

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Corporate Mental Health Alliance AUSTRALIA

The Corporate Mental Health Alliance (CMHAA) is a group of Australian businesses dedicated to providing mentally healthy workplaces for their people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

Website: cmhaa.org.au

LinkedIn: [Corporate Mental Health Alliance Australia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/corporate-mental-health-alliance-australia)



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