

# Active Listening - A Core Coaching Competency



Image Source: SHVETS Production from Pexels

Active listening is a multifaceted skill that has three levels, each of which builds upon the previous one to enhance the quality of communication and understanding.

The three levels of active listening are as follows:

## Level 1: Basic Listening

This foundational level involves three primary components:

- 1. Hearing:** The most basic form of listening, where you physically hear the words spoken by the patient.
- 2. Minimal Engagement:** Minimal involvement in the conversation, due to divided attention or a lack of understanding of the patient's message.
- 3. Limited Non-verbal Cues:** Minimal non-verbal cues, such as nodding or maintaining eye contact, are used to signal your awareness of the patient.

## Level 2: Reflective Listening

Reflective listening incorporates four elements:

- 1. Understanding:** Actively striving to understand the patient's message, including comprehending the underlying emotions and perspectives.
- 2. Empathy:** Acknowledging the patient's emotions and demonstrating empathy by putting yourself in their shoes.
- 3. Paraphrasing:** Rephrasing and repeating what the patient has said to show you understand.
- 4. Validation** Validating the patient's emotions by acknowledging their feelings.

## Level 3: Active or Deep Listening

Deep listening is the most advanced level of active listening and involves seven elements:

- 1. Full Presence:** Being fully present in the moment and dedicating your attention exclusively to the patient.
- 2. Accurate Empathy:** The ability to understand and share another person's feelings, while active listening is a communication skill that allows you to demonstrate that understanding.
- 3. Non-verbal Cues:** Highly attuned non-verbal cues that reflect the patient's emotional state.
- 4. Asking Open-Ended Questions** Encouraging the patient to explore their thoughts and feelings further by asking open-ended questions.
- 5. Silent Moments:** Allowing for silent moments in the conversation.
- 6. Avoiding Judgment:** Suspending judgment and refraining from offering solutions or advice unless explicitly requested by the patient.
- 7. Reflecting Feelings and Needs:** Reflecting the patient's feelings and unmet needs.

Deep listening fosters profound connections, trust, and effective communication, making it a valuable skill in healthcare, counseling, leadership, and various interpersonal contexts. It allows for the exploration of complex emotions and facilitates personal growth and understanding.

## Become a Certified Coach and Leader in Healthcare

Function First Coaching is dedicated to being your go-to partner in Healthcare Professional Development and credentialing. With more than 20 years of expertise in research, design, and delivery of evidence-based training, we became leaders in the healthcare industry with many accredited programs.

Join our community of trusted clients and partner with us to grow your skills, improve patient outcomes, and build sustainable practices.



American  
Occupational Therapy  
Association

Approved Provider

[LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES](#)

# Reference

Jahromi, M. K., Tabatabaee, S. S., Abdar, Z. E., & Rajabi, M. (2016). Active listening: The key of successful communication in hospital managers. *Electronic Physician*, 8(3), 2123–2128. <https://doi.org/10.19082/2123>

International Coaching Federation. (n.d.). The art of listening. Retrieved from <https://coachingfederation.org/blog/the-art-of-listening>

Miller, W. R. (2018). *Listening well: The art of empathetic understanding*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

Oliveira, J. (2024). The Art of Communication in Healthcare: Why Active Listening Matters. *Balance & Bliss Magazine*, November 2024. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385633474\\_The\\_Art\\_of\\_Communication\\_in\\_Healthcare\\_Why\\_Active\\_Listening\\_Matters](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385633474_The_Art_of_Communication_in_Healthcare_Why_Active_Listening_Matters)

Tennant, K., Long, A., & Toney-Butler, T. J. (2023). Active Listening. In *StatPearls*. StatPearls Publishing. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK442015/>

World Health Organization. (n.d.). 4.2.2 Active listening. In *WHO TB Knowledge Sharing Platform*. <https://tbksp.who.int/en/node/2328>