



LONG BEACH
CITY COLLEGE

ACTIVE LISTENING

When communicating, one cannot afford to exclude the art of listening. As a leader, you must listen to the students you serve in order to be effective. You need to listen and correctly understand all messages from group members. *Active listening* is different from regular hearing because you are trying to understand what the person is telling you, rather, than just listening to the sound of their voice. In active listening, the listener tries to understand what the speaker is *feeling* and what the message *means*.

Important Characteristics of a “Good Listener”

Be There

- Be present in heart, mind and spirit with the person. You need to hear what he/she has to say. If you don't have the time, or don't want to listen, wait until you do.

Accept

- Accept the person as she/he is without judgment or reservation or putting the person in a certain category, even though she/he may be very different from you. Accept his/her feelings, whatever they may be or however they may differ from your feelings or from what you think a person "should" feel. Don't be afraid that just because the feeling is expressed that the person will always feel that way. Remember that feelings change.

Trust

- Trust the person's ability to handle his/her own feelings, work through them, and find solutions to his/her own problems.

Listen

- Don't plan what you are going to say. Don't think of how you can interrupt. Don't think of how to solve the problem, how to admonish, how to console, and what the person "should" do. DON'T THINK TO STRUGGLE OR REACT.....LISTEN!

Keep Out of It

- Keep yourself removed. Stay objective. Don't intrude physically, verbally, mentally. Just listen. This is hard but possible.

Empathize

- Put yourself in the other's shoes, at his/her point of reference. Don't become that person, but understand what he/she is feeling, saying, thinking. Stay separate enough to be objective but involved enough to help.

* Adapted from University of Michigan, Office of Student Activities and Leadership, Leadership Handouts, 2010