

Reflective Listening

Reflective listening is the re-statement of what you have heard a speaker say to you for purposes of clarification. A second stage can be used to state a feeling the listener has heard embedded in the message. We are checking out our interpretations by asking if the reflection is a correct interpretation. We are reflecting but always with a question mark? No one likes to be told how they are feeling if it does not match their experience.

Reflective Listening is used in the compassionate listening environment:

1. When we sense we do not fully understand and we would like to learn more about how s/he experiences their situation;
2. To verify a feeling the listener has heard embedded in the message;
3. When we sense there is more to what the other person is saying than what is being expressed;
4. To summarize from time to time in order to pull together important ideas and establish a basis for further discussion.
5. To validate a quality or value the listener might have heard embedded in the message.

Benefits of Reflective Listening:

1. Deeper level of communication.
2. Increased empathy and compassion.
3. Greater self-understanding, clarity, and vulnerability.
4. Greater openness to new perspectives.

First level: FACTS

- *Listener repeats what the person has said and checks for confirmation that the important parts of the communication were heard accurately.*

Second level: FEELINGS

- *Listener expresses the meaning behind the words, including the feeling tone and asks for accuracy.*

Third level: VALUES/ESSENCE

- *The listener deepens the mirroring to the being or core level of the speaker's communication and reflects the underlying deepest values, qualities or essence of what was heard.*



Range of Responses

Reflective

Silence	allows speaker to stay with thoughts
Hmm...	affirms contact
Paraphrase/re-state	affirms contact & checks for understanding
Clarification	encourages speaker to explore own feelings/ideas
Reflection of core feelings	acknowledges basic feelings

Open/Accepting

Middle Range

Interpretation	brings to light what you think speaker might mean
Encouragement	pushes speaker to explore where reluctant

Directive, Non/reflective

Confront, Challenge	questions speaker's assumptions, inconsistencies, contradictions
Agreement/Disagreement	judges speaker's position or interpretation
Advice/Suggestion	tells speaker what to do
Convince	persistence related to taking action/changing opinion
Threaten	warns of punishment if speaker does not change

Closed/Judging