

Attentive Listening

The purpose of this template is to help you reap the benefits of listening attentively to your employees. Prepare for your coming conversations with these guidelines and tips. Add your notes in the boxes.

Plan

Write down what you will do to avoid getting unfocused, forming your own next response, or interrupting. For example, turn off your phone, leave time between meetings, follow this job aid, tell your employee that you're working on your listening skills, and so on.

TIP! Remind yourself frequently that your goal is to truly hear what the other person is saying.

Questions and comments

Occasional questions or comments to recap what the speaker has said communicate that you understand the message and are listening attentively. Try this:

Show understanding (Paraphrase)	What I hear you saying is [...]. Do I understand that correctly?
Reflect feelings	That must have been frustrating. I'm sorry to hear you experienced that.
Ask for clarification	Could you back up a second? I didn't understand what you just said about [...]. (Don't interrupt—wait for a pause.)
Address getting personal	I may not be understanding you correctly, and I find myself taking what you said personally. What I thought you just said is [...]; is that what you meant?
Get back on track	It is interesting to hear about [...], but I'm curious to hear more about [...].
Wrap it up	To summarize, I hear you saying that [...] happened, and what should happen now is [...]. Do I understand that correctly?

TIP! If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what someone is saying, try repeating the words mentally as you hear them. This will reinforce the speaker's message and help you stay focused.

Notes

In development talks with your employees, preferably use attentive listening as part of a structured format such as the coaching framework GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward).