Active Listening Handout

**Minimal Encouragements**

Sounds made, especially on the phone, to let one person know the other is there and listening. Such as, “Oh?”, “When?”, and “Really?”. They are questions, comments, or sounds that do not interfere with the flow of conversation, but do let the subject know that the negotiator is there and listening. They help build rapport and encourage the subject to continue talking.

# **Paraphrasing**

A summary in your own words of what you were told. Demonstrates listening, creates empathy and establishes rapport because it is evident that you have heard and understood. Usually, paraphrasing begins with the words, “Are you telling me…” or “Are you saying…” Paraphrasing also clarifies content, highlights issues and promotes give and take between you and the subject. It tends to make the subject a better listener.

# **Clarifying**

Assist in problem solving by figuring out how the person feels. Common phrases for you to use are, “You sound…”, “You seem…” , “I hear…” (emotion heard by you). You do not tell people how they are feeling, but how they sound to you as if they are feeling.

Do not be concerned about making a mistake in labeling emotions. The subject will correct you and will often appear grateful for the attempt

# **Open-Ended Questions/Close Ended Questions**

The primary use of open-ended questions is to help a subject start talking. Asking open-ended questions encourages the person to say more without actually directing the conversation. They are questions that cannot be answered with a single word such as “yes” or “no”. Open-ended questions get information for you with fewer questions, those that usually begin with how, what, when and where. Note that “why” questions are not asked directly. “Why” questions tend to steer the conversation toward blame and shut down communication. “Why” questions also tend to pass judgment.

Close ended questions can be answered with a yes or no. They are not great for getting information

*ACTIVE LISTENING SCENARIO*

You’re talking to a friend that you feel somewhat slighted by because he/she hasn’t gotten together with you recently and hasn’t returned calls you’ve left on their machine. You’re worried that you upset them somehow, but you’re not sure what you might have done.

*ACTIVE LISTENING SCENARIO*

You are sitting at home feeling bored. You have so much school work to do but do not feel like doing it. Your parents just do not understand. You wish you could go back to school but everything is closed because of the coronavirus. You get into an argument with your mom but you just do not understand what you are doing to get her upset. All you are doing is watching TV, it is not like if you have done anything.