



Active Listening Checklist for Peer Support Volunteers

This checklist provides examples of how to employ Active Listening skills in your CLF Mentorship connections. Don't worry if you can't check-off every item – we're here to work on them with you and address any questions you may have.

Were you able to...

- Provide a safe and non-judgmental place for your mentee to explore and express themselves?
- Listen more than you spoke?
- Listen with the intention of understanding, not replying?
- Demonstrate empathy?
- Remain aware of your biases, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and stereotypes?
- Respect your mentees' level of readiness to talk about certain things?
- Normalize and validate your mentees' feelings and reactions?
- Reassure your mentee by acknowledging the strength, resilience, and courage it took to reach out for support?
- Be mindful of how your own non-verbal cues, such as eye contact, nodding, posture, and facial expressions, could be perceived?
- Use "minimal encouragers"?
 - "Hmm, oh really? Yes, I see what you mean..." (verbal)
 - Nodding, leaning forward, and projecting your attention (non-verbal)
- Paraphrase what your mentee is telling you?
 - "It sounds like you're saying..."
 - "If I understand you correctly, it sounds like you're saying..."
- Ask open-ended questions?
 - "Tell me more about..."
 - "What was that experience like for you?"
 - "Can you tell me more about how that thing happened?"
- Pay attention to clues that may indicate a mentee is at risk for mental health crisis?
- Use closed questions, such as ones that can be answered "Yes" or "No," when assessing for clues of a mental health crisis or when trying to connect with a shy mentee?
- Ask clarification questions?
- Use mirroring to label, contain, and put words to your mentees' feelings?
 - "You seem..."
 - "It sounds to me as if..."
- Use silence to create a listening space, allow for contemplation and/or acknowledge something profound?
- Help your mentee find the energy and motivation to tackle difficult situations?
- Brainstorm possible actions, solutions, resources, etc.?
- Collaborate with your mentee to write down an actionable plan?
- Encourage your mentee to access resources within their immediate reach?

- “Is there something that usually helps you feel better when you experience this negative emotion? Have you been able to do that for yourself this week?” (ex. going for a short walk outside)
- “Is there a particular friend or family member you feel would understand what you’re going through if you talked to them?”
- Share external resources that help you during your own experiences?
- Ask the CLF Patient Services Team for support as necessary?
 - We’re here if you need us! Email support@concussionfoundation.org

...if you were able to do any of these, you’re doing great! Keep up the great work. Being an active listener is a skill that takes practice!

Were you able to avoid...

- Frequently interrupting your mentee?
- Distracting behaviors (ex., wiggling, giggling, checking your phone often)
- Asking “why” when it comes to feelings or pushing mentees to explain something in detail that may cause further distress?
- Minimizing what your mentee is going through?
- Giving unsolicited advice or trying to solve your mentees’ problems without being asked for advice?
- Taking on your mentees’ burden
 - Remember: You are responsible **to** your mentee, but not **for** your mentee
- Overall, were you authentically present in the moment for mentee?

...if you found yourself doing one or any of these, don’t worry. Remaining aware of things to avoid is already a step in the right direction. You’re doing great!

Acknowledgments

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