

2016

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training



De-Escalation
Active Listening Skills

Student Guide

Active Listening Skills

Safety, De-stigmatization, and Resources should be kept in mind when using Active Listening Skills. Keeping dignity and respect in mind will help with rapport building.

Definitions:

- A communication technique that a listener uses to show the speaker that they are paying attention and understand the message that is being relayed.
- Active listening is a communication technique used in counseling, training and conflict resolution, which require the listener to feed back what they hear to the speaker.

Why Active Listening:

Empathy vs Sympathy

- Empathy: Understanding what others are feeling and/or thinking because you have experienced it yourself or can put yourself in their shoes.
- Sympathy: Acknowledging another person's emotional hardships and providing comfort and assurance.

Using active listening skills and techniques can help the listener gain a better understanding of the situation that the speaker is going through. This helps relay to the speaker that the listener has empathy towards the situation. The listener gains more information by using skills and has the ability to retain the information more effectively. Rapport building in heightened emotional states is important because it can help you with gaining compliance through influence.

Clinical evidence and research suggest that active listening is an effective way to create behavioral change in others (Rogers, C., & Dymond, R., 1954). When listened to by other, individuals tend to evaluate their own feelings and thoughts, allowing them to have more clarity. This allows them to become better problems solvers and more accepting of someone else's point of view. Showing empathy allows the individual to have less fear of being criticized and open up to a realistic appraisal of their own position (Noesner, G., & Webster, M., 1997).

The use of active listening skills helps create an empathic relationship between the officer and the subject. Building this empathy can help create rapport, which in time can help be used to influence the person's behavior. Using this approach in crisis intervention shows an effort in a short period of time to stabilize emotions and restores a subject's ability to think more clearly.

Active listening- Physical Skills:

Active listening starts with your physical characteristics and approach when engaging someone. These skills may not work on everyone you spend time with but if you use them consistently they will reflect professionalism on all your encounters.

Creating a scene with empathy and respect will help an individual feel safe enough to consider other perspectives and become more receptive to the positive suggestion from law enforcement.

- Face the speaker
- Nod occasionally
- Maintain eye contact
- Minimize distractions
- Keep an open mind
- Open and inviting posture when safe

- Open hands while talking or listening
- Thinking position
- Sitting when safe
- Respond appropriately
- Smile and other facial expressions
- Talk to the person directly

Internal and External distractions:

Internal distractions are your own personal biases and emotions.

Emotions:

- Anger
- Frustration
- Irritation

Biases:

- Giving more attention to people who look like you
- Wealthy
- Attractive

Barriers to Active Listening:

- Arguing
- Patronizing
- Interrupting
- Moralizing
- Rescue trap
- Demeaning
- Intimidating
- Police Jargon- 10 code, statue numbers, etc.
- “Why” questions
- Quick Reassurances
- Advising
- Preaching
- Lecturing

Seven Active Listening Skills:

- Reflecting/Mirroring
- Open-Ended Questions
- Minimal Encouragers
- Emotion Labeling
- Paraphrasing
- “I” Messages
- Effective Pauses

Use these techniques to show the speaker that you are listening. It can be used to help continue or start a conversation, and some techniques can be used to help you gather more information. Using these techniques can help you retain more information from your conversation with an individual. These are design to let someone who is speaking know that you are listening, resulting in better rapport and de-escalation.

Reflecting/Mirroring:

- This should be simple and short. You repeat key words or the last few spoken words that the speaker just said. This shows the speaker that the listeners is trying to understand and is using the speaker’s terms as reference. This also helps indicate to the speaker that the listener wants them to continue the conversation and maybe talk more about what the listener reflected back.
 - “Gist” of a sentence
 - Repeating the last few words
 - Results in more intelligence
 - Voice inflection is important- Thinks of the tone of a question

Example: “Ever since we broke up I want to die”- Speaker
“You want to die...”- Listener (Mirroring)
“You want the pain to go away...” –Listener (Reflecting)

Open Ended Questions:

- These are designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the subject’s own knowledge and/or feelings. It is the opposite of close-ended questions, which encourages a short or single-word answer.
- Using the acronym WHaT can help you create open-ended questions.
 - What
 - How
 - (and)
 - “Tell me more about...”

Minimal Encouragers:

- These are small signals that let the speaker know you are listening and understanding what they are saying.
- Examples:
 - “uh-huh”
 - “mmm”
 - “ok”
 - Head nodding
- *Note:* Be cautious using “ok” in certain situations. It can relay that you are approving of an inappropriate action.
 - *Example:* I am going to kill myself.”, and the listener responds “ok”.

Emotion Labeling:

- This is an important step in building rapport. It helps the speaker know that the listener is seeing and understanding the emotions of the situation or content.
- You let the speaker know that you are seeing or hearing an emotion that they are experiencing or have experience.
- Don’t be afraid of labeling the emotions incorrect.
- Examples:
 - “This experience sounds horrifying to you.”
 - “You look deflated and sad.”
- See the emotion wheel/list later in this section.

Psychological research has classified six facial expressions which correspond to distinct universal emotions: disgust, sadness, happiness, fear, anger, surprise [Black,Yacoob,95]. It is interesting to note that four out of the six are negative emotions.

Paul Ekman's initial research determined that there were six core emotions, which he termed *universal emotions*. These original universal emotions are:

1. Happiness - symbolized by raising of the mouth corners (an obvious smile) and tightening of the eyelids
2. Sadness - symbolized by lowering of the mouth corners, the eyebrows descending to the inner corners and the eyelids drooping
3. Surprise - symbolized by eyebrows arching, eyes opening wide and exposing more white, with the jaw dropping slightly
4. Fear - symbolized by the upper eyelids raising, eyes opening and the lips stretching horizontally
5. Disgust - symbolized by the upper lip raising, nose bridge wrinkling and cheeks raising
6. Anger - symbolized by eyebrows lowering, lips pressing firmly and eyes bulging

There is a seventh emotion that is sometimes considered universal.

7. Contempt - symbolized by half of the upper lip tightening up (using what is called the risorius muscle) and often the head is tilted slightly back.

Paraphrasing:

- You translate the conversation into your own words and let the speaker know.
- Let's the speaker know you are listening.
- Helps you gain more information and clarify the information you have been given.

"I" Statements:

- Used to convey your concerns in a manner that is non-threatening and does not put the subject in an immediate defensive state.
- Helps to build rapport by establishing the listener as an individual and not a uniform.
- Example;
 - "I want to know what happened today but it is hard for me to focus on your words when you have a knife in your hand."

Effective Pauses:

- This is a break in conversation when you do not say anything.
- Used immediately before or after saying something meaningful.
- Silence is uncomfortable for most people.
- Gives you a chance to gather your thoughts.

S.A.F.E.R. Model

This model helps illustrate when active listening skills fail or when they should not be used. As professionals all situations are handled with dignity and respect, which should never be overlooked. The following are situations where active listening would not be utilized in law enforcement.

Security of Person and/or Property:

Always follow your officer safety training and SOP (standard operating policy) when handling situations involving the security of people and places. If you are on a scene where someone is being attacked you must react to the safety of the person (victim), this is not a time to attempted verbal de-escalation skills with the offender. If property is being destroyed or someone is trying to gain entry into a secure location active listening skills may not be affective when immediate action is required.

Attack

If you are being attacked protect yourself do not attempt to use active listening skills when your safety is at risk. Immediate safety for yourself and others should always trump active listening.

Flight

If during the course of an investigation the offender flees from custody, you must react to the situation and apprehend the offender. Active listening skills may not be useful in this situation but you may be required to give verbal commands.

Excessive Repetition

When voluntary compliance is not achieved after you have exhausted all verbal options, you must react. Some tips can be offering options and explaining what the recourse is for noncompliance.

Revised Priorities

If during a contact a more imminent calls comes out and you must take it, communication needs to end. If you are interviewing someone and over the air it comes out that they are wanted for a violent offense your technique needs to adjust towards taking the person into custody.

Article Review:

Livingston, J., Desmarais, S., Verdun-Jones, S., Parent, R., Michalak, E., & Brink, J. (2014). Perceptions and experiences of people with mental illness regarding their interactions with police. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 334-340.

This study examined perceptions and lived experiences of people with mental illness and their interaction with law enforcement. 60 people living with a mental illness who had contact with law enforcement in Vancouver, Canada were interviewed about their interaction and perceptions.

- 72% (almost three-quarters) were satisfied with how police officers handled their most recent interactions.
- 51% rated their previous contacts with the police as a positive experience.
- 32% rated their previous contacts with the police as a negative experience.

This study has quotes from people living with a mental illness about law enforcement interactions and here are a few:

On access to personal information

“So they [the police] go into a situation and know how to handle the person, how to speak to the person, know a bit about his background, so the don't offend them or set them off, or how to get the situation under control.”

On communicating effectively

“Ask the person if they are under the care of a physician or psychiatrist. Are they on medication for a mood disorder? Be gentle, but ask questions... Ask if there is any help they need. Tell them we all need to be safe, treat them with dignity.”

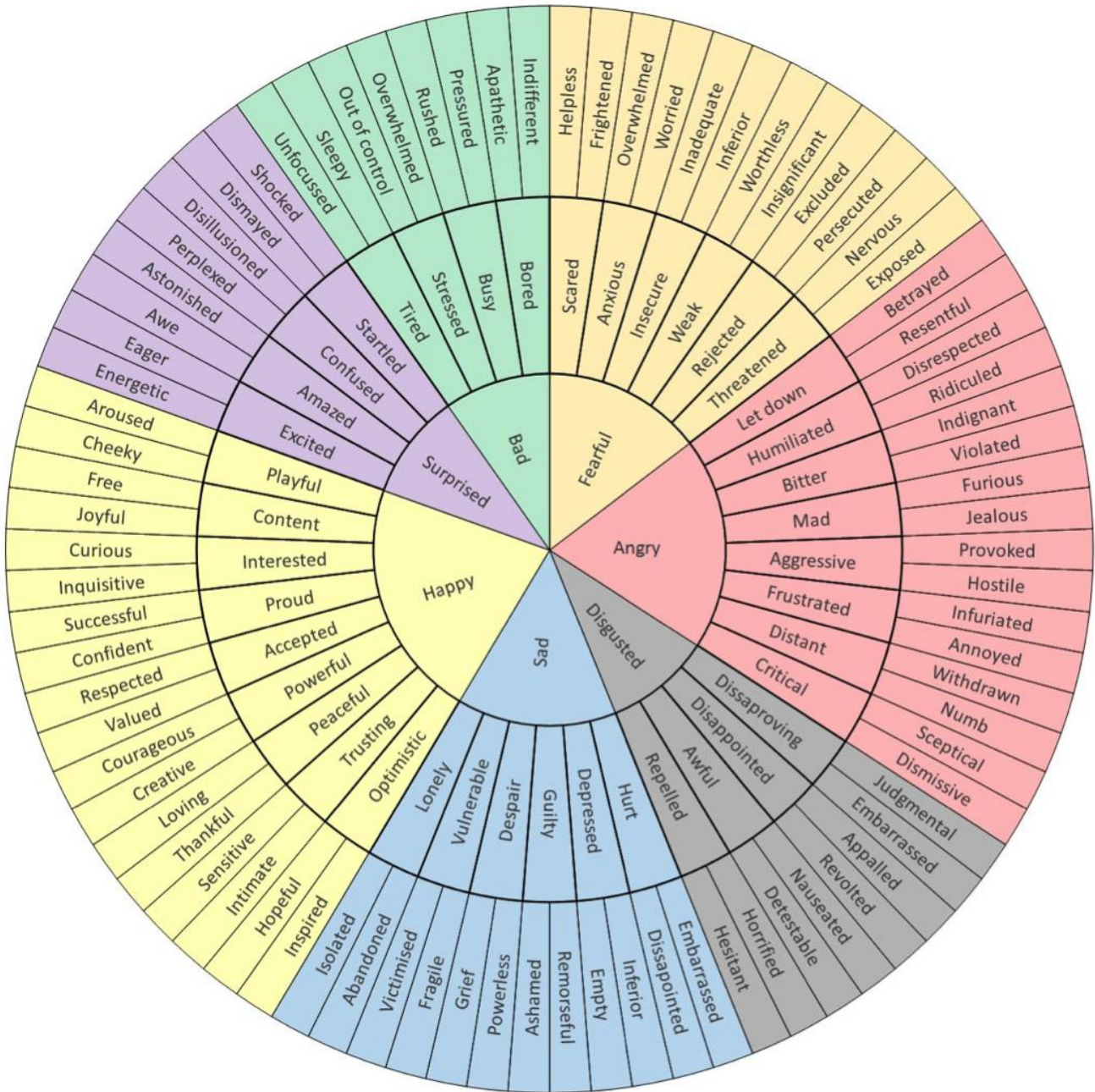
On treating people with compassion

“Sometimes be more human, not so policy driven. And I don't just mean handcuffs, I mean sometimes I'm just transported and... I could have been a sack of flour. ... It's all just by the book... and I'm just nothing, I'm not a human being”

On connecting with the community

“Follow up with someone like me to see what I am like when I am well. Then they [the police] can learn more about mental illness and know how to handle people like me.”

Emotion Labeling



Pleasant Feelings							
Open	Happy	Alive	Good	Love	Interested	Positive	Strong
Understanding	Great	Playful	Calm	Loving	Concerned	Eager	Impulsive
Confident	Gay	Courageous	Peaceful	Considerate	Affected	Keen	Free
Reliable	Joyous	Energetic	At Ease	Affectionate	Fascinated	Earned	Sure
Easy	Lucky	Liberated	Comfortable	Sensitive	Intrigued	Intent	Certain
Amazed	Fortunate	Optimistic	Pleased	Tender	Absorbed	Anxious	Rebellious
Free	Delighted	Provocative	Encouraged	Devoted	Inquisitive	Inspired	Unique
Sympathetic	Overjoyed	Impulsive	Clever	Attracted	Nosy	Determined	Dynamic
Interested	Gleeful	Free	Surprised	Passionate	Snoopy	Excited	Tenacious
Satisfied	Thankful	Frisky	Content	Admiration	Engrossed	Enthusiastic	Hardy
Receptive	Important	Animated	Quiet	Warm	Curious	Bold	Secure
Accepting	Festive	Spirited	Certain	Touched		Brave	
Kind	Ecstatic	Thrilled	Relaxed	Sympathy		Daring	
	Satisfied	Wonderful	Serene	Close		Challenged	
	Glad		Free and Easy	Loved		Optimistic	
	Cheerful		Bright	Comforted		Re-enforced	
	Sunny		Blessed	Drawn Toward		Confident	
	Merry		Reassured	Empathy		Hopeful	
	Elated					Earnest	
	Jubilant						
	Empowered						

Difficult/Unpleasant Feelings							
Angry	Depressed	Confused	Helpless	Indifferent	Afraid	Hurt	Sad
Irritated	Lousy	Upset	Incapable	Insensitive	Fearful	Crushed	Tearful
Enraged	Disappointed	Doubtful	Alone	Dull	Terrified	Tormented	Sorrowful
Hostile	Discouraged	Uncertain	Paralyzed	Nonchalant	Suspicious	Deprived	Pained
Insulting	Ashamed	Indecisive	Fatigued	Neutral	Anxious	Pained	Grief
Sore	Powerless	Perplexed	Useless	Reserved	Alarmed	Tortured	Anguish
Annoyed	Diminished	Embarrassed	Inferior	Weary	Panic	Dejected	Desolate
Upset	GUILTY	Hesitant	Vulnerable	Bored	Nervous	Rejected	Desperate
Hateful	Dissatisfied	Shy	Empty	Preoccupied	Scared	Injured	Pessimistic
Unpleasant	Miserable	Stupefied	Forced	Cold	Worried	Offended	Unhappy
Offensive	Detestable	Disillusioned	Hesitant	Disinterested	Frightened	Afflicted	Lonely
Bitter	Repugnant	Unbelieving	Despair	Lifeless	Timid	Aching	Grieved
Aggressive	Despicable	Skeptical	Frustrated	Numb	Shaky	Victimized	Mournful
Resentful	Abominable	Distrustful	Distressed		Restless	Heartbroken	Dismayed
Inflamed	Terrible	Misgiving	Woeful		Doubtful	Agonized	
Provoked	In Despair	Lost	Pathetic		Threatened	Appalled	
Incensed	Sulky	Unsure	Tragic		Cowardly	Humiliated	
Infuriated	Bad	Uneasy	In a Stew		Quaking	Wronged	
Cross	A Sense of Loss	Pessimistic	Dominated		Menaced	Alienated	
Worked Up	Down	Tense	Worthless		Wary		
Boiling	Down n' out		Hopeless				
Fuming							
Aggitated							

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2/20/16

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ACCREDITATION AND APPROVAL TRACKING

Course#/Title: De-Escalation Training: Active Listening Skills

Original Accreditation#: NM15101G

New Accreditation#:

Prepared By:

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