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COURSE CODE: PCS 102

COLLEGE: SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

DEPT: PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

ASSIGNMENT: TERM PAPER WORK ON ACTIVE LISTENING.

WHAT IS ACTIVE LISTENING:

Active listening can be defined or seen as a technique that is used in counseling, training and solving disputes or conflict. It requires that the listener fully concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what is being said.

Active listening involves the listener observing the speaker’s behaviors and body language having the ability to interpret a person’s body language lets the listener develop a more accurate understanding of the speaker’s message. It is important to note That the listener is not necessarily agreeing with the speaker, simply starting what was said The purpose of active listening in conflict resolution to gain and demonstrate understanding of the other, which will serve as a basic for reaching joint decisions and ultimately resolving a conflict. In order to succeed in this, active listening has address common problems in oral interpersonal communication. This essay examines the ways in which the techniques of clarification, paraphrasing, summarizing, reflection and digging deal with communication pitfalls. It also draws our attention to the underlying need for awareness of our listening shortcomings

Even though active listening belongs as a concept to the field of interpersonal and oral communication. It has turned into a prominent subject of studies only with the advent of conflict resolution. Conflict resolution has emerged as an area of general interest within the past thirty years, mainly as a consequence of the advancements in transport and technologies and resulting opportunities for global political and economic interactions. Its rapid development has been fueled by growing awareness of the limitations of traditional negotiation (based on positional bargaining) and the search for more productive negotiating methods that will bring mutually satisfactory and long-lasting outcomes. Nowadays conflict resolution is applied across a wide range of situations, from ethnic conflicts on an International scale , such as tension between Bosinans, serbs and croats in the wake of the 1995 war, to local war , to local disagreements, such as a clash between the management and the workers in a factory, to interpersonal conflicts, eg. Between roommates in a residence. The recognition of its effectiveness and versatility has drawn considerable attention to the techniques that constitute it.

BENEFITS OF ACTIVE LISTENING

Expressing your thought, feelings and opinions clearly and effectively is part of the communication process. Such expression is complemented by actively listening to and understanding the message the messages others are trying to get across to you. Indeed, good communication and understanding are made possible by active listening.

The way to improve your active listening skills is through practice. You should not allow yourself become distracted by things that may be going on around you. Try to make a conscious effort to hear not only the words, but truly what the other person is saying.

Genuine active listening will:

* Encourage the speaker to keep talking
* Indicate that you are following the conversation
* Set a comfortable tone
* Signal to the speaker that you are attentive and interested.

Although you may not necessarily agree with others, you should come to appreciate the many experiences and perspectives that people can share.

Importantly, if a misunderstanding has occurred, active listening will enable communication to be clarified before any further confusion arises.

To help you improve your skill, implementation of some active listening strategies will you reduce the potential for stress and tension, elicit greater openness, and build rapport with your lecturers, tutors and fellow students.

KEYS ELEMENTS OF ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Pay attention

-ensure your face the speaker

-Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge their message

- Don’t look at your watch, phone, other people or activities in or beyond the room

- Refrain from side conversations (even if they are whispered).

2) Show that you are listening:

-Be aware of your body language- crossed arms can make you seem closed or negative.

-Encourage the speaker to continue by short or verbal comments

- Ensure your posture and demeanour are open and inviting

- Offer some facial expressions, such as a nod or a smile.

3) Respond appropriately:

-Ask related and relevant questions

- Reflect on what has been said by paraphrasing

- Seek clarification.

-Summarise the speakers comments

4) Respond appropriately

-Assert your opinions respectively

- Be empathic and non judgemental

- Avoid interrupting the speaker unnecessarily

- Respond openly and honestly, with an appropriately tone of voice

- Treat the other person as you would want to be treated.

5) Defer judgement:

- Avoid making assumptions

- Be empathic and non judgemental

- Consider the communication from the perspective of the speaker

- Let the presentation run its course

- Listen to the entire message before interjecting with your own comments.

REFERENCES

Wikipedia (2010) Active listening chart, accesed 16 June 2014.

individuals in conflict often contradict each other ambushing occurs when one listens to someone else’s argument for its weakness and ignore strengths.

This may include a distortion of speaker’s argument to gain competitive advantage on the other hand, if one finds that a competitive advantage on the other hand, if one finds that the other party understands, an atmosphere of corporation and be created in one of Thomas Gordon book which is leader effectiveness training, who coined the term “ active listening is certainly not complex” Listeners needs only restate in their own language, their impression of the expression of the sender, still, learning to do active listening is a rather difficult task.

Active listening is also the ability to focus completely on a speaker, understand their message, comprehend the information and respond thoughtfully. Unlike passive listening, which is the act of hearing a speaker without retaining their message, this highly valued interpersonal communication skill ensures you are able to engage and later recall specific details without needing information repeated. Active listener use verbal and non- verbal technique to show and keep their attention on the speaker. This not only supports your ability to focus, but also help to ensure the speaker can see that you are focused and engaged. Instead of thinking about and mentally rehearsing what you might say when the speaker is done an active listener carefully you might say when the speaker is done an active listener carefully consider the speaker’s words and and commits the information to memory.

Active listening is a specific communication skills, based on the work psychologist Carl Rogars, which involves give free and undivided attention to the speaker; placing all of ones attention and awareness at the disposal of another person, listening with interest and appreciating without interrupting. Active listening is a difficult discipline. It requires intense concentration and attention to everything the person is conveying, both verbal and nonverbally . It requires the listeners to empty themselves to personnel concerns, distraction and preconceptions. Huge Mackey points out in the good listener that this takes courage, generosity and patience. In active listening, we listen not only with ears, but we also listen to the message buried in the words, We listen to the voice , the appearance , and the body language of the other. We simply try to absorb everything the speaker is saying Verbally and Non-verbally without adding subtracting or amending.

Acting listening is a skill that can be acquired and with practice. However, active listening can be difficult to master and will, therefore take time and patience to develop. Active listening means, as its name suggests, actively listening . That is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively ‘hearing’ the message of the speaker.

Active listening involves listening with all senses , as well as giving full attention to the speaker, it is important that the active listener is also seen to be listening other wise the speaker may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener.

Interest can be conveyed to the speaker by using both Verbal and non-Verbal messages such as maintaining eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, agreeing by saying yes or simply ‘Mmm hmm’ to encourage them to continue. By providing this ‘feedback’ the person speaking will usually feel more at ease and therefore communicate more easily, openly and honestly.

* Listening is the most fundamental component of interpersonal communication skills.
* Listening is not something that just happens ( that is hearing) , listening is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the messages of the speaker.
* Listeners should remain neutral and Non-judgemental, this means trying not to take sides or form opinions, especially pauses and short periods of silence, therefore, be given adequate time for that.

Active listening not only means focusing fully on the speaker but also actively showing verbal and non-verbal signs of listening.

SIGNS OF ACTIVE LISTENING

Non-Verbal signs of attentive or active listening . This is a generic list of non-verbal signs of listening , in other words people who are listening are more likely or display at least some of these signs. However these signs not be appropriate in all situations and across all cultures.

* SMILE;

Small smiles can be used to show that the listener is paying attention to what is being said or as a way of agreeing or being said or as a way of agreeing or being happy about the message being listened to and understanding .

* EYE CONTACT;

It is normal and usually encouraging for the listener to look at the speaker eye contact can however be intimidating, especially for more shy speakers guage how much eye contact is appropriate for any and when situation combine eye combine eye contact with smiles and other

non-verbal messages to encourage the speaker.

* POSTURES ;

Posture can tell a lot about the sender and receiver in interpersonal and interactions. The attentive listener tends to learn slightly forward or sideways whilst sitting. Other signs of active listening may include a slight slant of the head or resting the head on one hand.

* MIRRORING;

Automatic reflection/mirroring of any facial expression used by the speaker can be a sign of attentive listening. These reflective expressions can help to show sympathy and empathy in more emotional situations. Attempting to consciously mimic facial expression ( ie. Not automatic reflection of expressions) can be a sign of in attention .

* DISTRACTION;

The active listeners will not be distracted and therefore will refrain from fidegeting, looking at a clock or watch , dooding ,playing with their hair or picking their finger nails.

VERBAL SIGNS OF ATTENTIVE OR ACTIVE LISTENING

Positive Reinforcement

Although a strong signal of attentiveness, caution should be used when using positive words of encouragement maybe beneficial to the speaker should use the sparingly so as not to distract from what is being said or place unnecessary emphasis on parts of the message.

Casual and frequent use of words and phrases , such as, very good, yes or indeed can become irritating to the speaker . It is usually better to elaborate and explain why you are agreeing with a certain point.

* REMEMBERING;

The human mind is notoriously bad at remembering details, especially for any length of time. However, remembering a few key points, or even the name of the speaker, can help to reinforce that the message sent have been received and understood .ie. listening has been successful . Remembering details, ideas and concepts from previous concepts from previous conversations proves that attention was kept and is likely to encourage the speaker to continue.

* QUESTIONING ;

The listener can demonstrate that they have been paying attention by asking relevant questions and / or making statements that build or help to clarify what the speaker has said. By asking relevant questions the listener also help to reinforce that they an interest in what the speaker has been saying.

* REFLECTION;

Reflection is closely repeating or paraphrasing what the speaker has said in order to show comprehension . Reflection is a powerful skill that can reinforce the message of the speaker and demonstrate understanding.

* CLARIFICATION;

Clarifying involves asking questions of the speaker to ensure that the correct message has been received. Clarification usually involves the use of open questions which enables the speakers to necessary.

* SUMMARISATION;

Repeating a summary of what has been said back to the speaker is a technique used by the listener to repeat what has been said in their own words. Summarizing involves taking the main points of the received message and reiterating them in a logical and clear way, giving the speaker chance to correct if necessary.

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS ARE:

-Validation

-Professionalism

- Courtesy

- Humility

-Collaboration

-Situational awareness

- Interpretation

- Understanding

- Emotional intelligence

- Non-verbal communication

- Transparency

- Integrity

- Body language

- Self- awareness

- Vocal tone

- Confidence.

By employing these active listening techniques, you will impress your interviewer as a thoughtful, analytical, highly desirable coindate for the position . Think about possible situations that may occur during an interview and come up with strategies to allow you to listen actively.

NOTE:

Active listeners avoid interrupting at all costs, summarize and repeat back what they have heard, and observe body language to give them an extra level of understanding . Also active listening is a helpful skill for any worker to develop . It helps you truly understand what people are saying in conversations and meetings (and not just what you want to hear , or think you hear). During interviews, it can help you build rapport with your interviwer.

* It’s important to not interrupt, or worse, try to answer the question before you know what the interviewer is asking.

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