

Unit 5 Learning Activity

For the Unit 5 Learning Activity, you will discuss your interaction with your client. Plan to spend 20 to 30 minutes with your pretend client or another friend. You will spend 5 minutes practicing non-directive, effective and active listening skills while your client talks about a problem or concern.

Your client will talk for up to a minute about a concern and then when he or she is done, you will briefly paraphrase thoughts and reflect feelings. Then your client will speak again continuing with whatever thoughts are on his or her mind and you will repeat this exercise. In five minutes, you will probably each have a chance to speak three to five times.

If there is something you do not understand, you can ask a question for clarification. However, please keep in mind that most questions are disguised opinions of the listener. Please note that nowhere in this assignment should you tell your client what you think or what suggestions you have to solve their problem. Your entire focus in this assignment is to practice active and effective listening.

If your friend would like to switch roles and practice non-directive active listening skills, then do so.

Now that you have received some feedback regarding your listening skills, you can focus on ways to improve your listening skills. Next repeat the entire exercise with another 5 minutes (or another 5 minutes each way) as well as feedback on your listening.

Essential Non-Directive Effective and Active Listening Skills

Build Rapport	Look at the person who is speaking. Pay attention. Make eye contact. Think only about what your client saying. Listen without interrupting until your client stops talking.
Empathize	Do your best to understand their point of view. Pay attention to your client's tone of voice and posture for clues as to how they are feeling.
Paraphrase	Repeat in your own words the essence of what they have said.
Reflect Feelings	Feed back to you client what you have heard him or her say emphasizing the way your client is feeling.
Clarify	If there is something they have said that you do not understand, ask questions for clarification. However, most questions are hooks. A hook is a question which does not seek an answer but is instead to express an opinion of the questioner.
Feedback: Invite your client to give you feedback about how well you understand. Ask him or her to tell you of three things you are doing that helps him or her to feel understood. Ask for one suggestion for how to improve your listening skills.	Listen to this feedback using the same skills of non-directive interviewing. Please note that nowhere in this assignment should you tell your client what you think or what suggestions you have to solve their problem. Your entire focus in this assignment is to practice active and effective listening.

Learning Activity

For this week's Learning Activity, write 2 paragraphs regarding this process for you as a clinician:

1. What was easy?
2. What was hard?
3. What was difficult about rapport building?
4. How difficult was it to keep track of the content of what your client was saying and what was important to him or her?
5. How difficult was it to figure out what your client was feeling?
6. What in your own background may have affected how easy or hard these skills are for you?
7. Was it difficult not to share your own thinking and suggestions?
8. Did you fudge and tell your own ideas even though the instructions said not to? (The pull to do this is very strong for most of us.)
9. What did your client tell you were your strengths as an active and effective listener?
10. What are one or two specific ways you can improve your listening skills?