

## LMP Skills: Active Listening and Effective Questioning

### What is Active Listening?

Active listening is more than just listening to the words. It's also about sensing the person's emotions and noticing their body language, so that you hear the complete message.



Your goal as an active listener is to truly understand the speaker's perspective (regardless of whether you agree) and to communicate to them that they have your full attention.



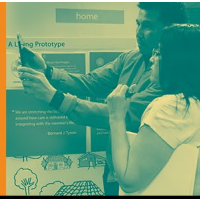
When you're really listening and asking relevant and thoughtful questions, people are more willing to share information and work with you to help find a solution.

### DO

- ✓ Pay attention to what's being said and show them you're listening
  - Make eye contact
  - Nod occasionally
  - Encourage them to continue with a "yes" or "uh-huh"
- ✓ Use an active listening mindset ("listening with" instead of "listening for")
  - Listen with curiosity
  - Listen with suspended judgment
  - Listen with a commitment to understand their perspective
  - Listen with a desire to work with them to find a solution
- ✓ Reflect back what you hear and ask open-ended questions

### DON'T

- ✗ Have preconceived ideas
- ✗ Become argumentative
- ✗ Create or respond to distractions
- ✗ Shut out new ideas
- ✗ Interrupt
- ✗ Listen for pauses
- ✗ Listen for errors, criticism, or blame
- ✗ Start thinking of what to say before they finish
- ✗ Use negative body language, such as crossed arms



## LMP Skills: Active Listening and Effective Questioning

### What is Effective Questioning?

Effective questioning is using thought-provoking questions to engage the other person in an open conversation to elicit information and stimulate thinking.

Using open-ended questions is a great way to elicit information. Open-ended questions usually begin with “how,” “why,” or “what” and cannot be answered with “yes” or “no.” They require the other person to elaborate.



Your goal as an effective questioner is to expand your understanding of the situation and the underlying interests and concerns of the other person.

Good questions are:

- Relevant
- Clear
- Concise
- Purposeful
- Guiding but not leading



When you’re asking effective and thoughtful questions, people are motivated to think, express feelings, analyze, speculate, and problem-solve.

### DO

- ✓ Use an inviting, non-judgmental tone
- ✓ Think about the response you’re hoping for
- ✓ Ask 1 question at a time and listen for the answer (Count to 10 before you rephrase)
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions, such as:
  - What do you think about...?
  - Can you help me understand why this is important to the team?
  - Can you help me understand how that would work?
- ✓ Elicit more information with statements such as:
  - Tell me more about that.
  - Give me an example.
  - Tell me about a time when...

### DON'T

- ✗ Be judgmental (“Why did you do that?”)
- ✗ Ask leading questions (“Don’t you agree?”)
- ✗ Use declarative questions (“Wow! You’re still talking?!?!”)