

ACTIVE LISTENING TOOLS

TOOL	Attentive, open body language
DEFINITION	Postures typically associated with being trusting, welcoming, relaxed, and open
EXAMPLES	Eye contact; upright posture, perhaps even leaning toward speaker; arms and legs not crossed; calm tone of voice; hand not over mouth; brow not furrowed
TOOL	Open-ended questions
DEFINITION	Allow parties substantial latitude to select the content and wording of a response, and define the agenda. Lets them back out of responding. Not yes-or-no or one-word-answer questions. Note: "Can you tell me...?" is NOT as open-ended as it could be.
EXAMPLES	"What brought you here?" "What happened?" "And then?" "What leads you to say that?" "Would you kindly say more about how you see things?" "Help me understand better..." "How do you see it differently?" "How would that work?" "How will _____ react if you do _____?" "When you say _____, what do you mean? In what ways?" "What am I still missing in your story? What else do you want me to hear?"
TOOL	Clarifying questions
DEFINITION	Checking on a specific aspect of the client's story in terms of mediator's own confusion, not the client's misstatements, without overtly indicating your disbelief.
EXAMPLES	"Would you please explain further how _____ plays into all of this?" "I'm not sure I totally understand what you are telling me about _____. From your point of view...How does that work?" "I'm a bit confused. You've told me that_____, but you also told me _____. Can you clarify this point for me?"
TOOL	Summarizing
DEFINITION	Paraphrasing back to the party the key points about their story.
EXAMPLES	"Let me see if I got this straight..." "It sounds like..." "What I hear you saying is..." "So, you feel like..." "You have very valid concerns. Let me see if I can explain them..." "Did I understand correctly that you are saying that...?"
TOOL	Reframing
DEFINITION	Paraphrasing an incendiary remark, but in less emotionally charged terms. A re-wording of the person's viewpoint aiming to be helpful, and is open to correction.
EXAMPLES	"So you feel frustrated by _____'s behavior."
TOOL	Mirroring
DEFINITION	Repeating back to the party exactly or almost exactly what they said to you, in order to prompt them to keep on talking about that subject, while helping them to feel heard.
EXAMPLES	Party: "When she said no, I got upset." Mediator: "You got upset when she said no?"
TOOL	Reality testing
DEFINITION	Asking the party to examine what seem to you like assumptions, without rejecting their reasoning as flawed or wrong.
EXAMPLES	"I understand that you feel _____. To me, that seems inconsistent with _____. What is your thinking about that?" or "What do you think would happen if you were to do _____?"