

# LISTENER

**GOALS:** To enter the perspective and mindset of the other person until I can see the situation through their eyes. To ask questions and probe for deeper understanding and expand my knowledge of the others feelings, thoughts and experiences.

## LISTEN CALMLY:

- Don't defend yourself, argue, explain or problem solve. You don't have to agree with what you are hearing in order to listen and explore.
- Focus on the speaker's experience, not yours.

## CONTROL YOUR REACTIVENESS:

- Remember, when defenses go up...listening goes down. Reminders to yourself: I can listen with an open mind even if I disagree. The speaker is a separate person with their own feelings, thoughts, personality and family history.

## BE AWARE OF YOUR NON-VERBAL RESPONSES:

- Don't roll eyes, sigh, groan, or give responses that stop communication.
- Maintain eye contact and encourage the Speaker to continue.

## FOUR STEPS OF LISTENING

1. Listen (Ask the speaker to stop and let you summarize if it gets too long).
2. Repeat back in your own words what you heard and check for accuracy.
3. Ask questions that will broaden your understanding.
4. Respond with empathy ... "I see what you are saying" or "I can see how you might feel that way."

## GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Tell me more, I want to understand.
  - How does that make you feel?
  - Are there other times you have felt this? Are there times you felt this as a child?
  - Are you Hurt? Afraid? Scared? Angry?
  - What are your Hopes? Expectations? Desires?
  - What do you need? (This is a closing question, so save it for last)
  - Don't ask "Why?" (It's often accusatory)
- If you are wrong, don't apologize until you have fully listened.