

# OMBUDS OFFICE

Harvard Medical School  
Harvard Dental School  
Harvard School of Public Health



## Active Listening Techniques

Statement	Purpose	What We Do	Examples
Encouraging	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. to set tone of cooperation</li><li>2. to convey interest</li><li>3. encourage the other person to keep talking</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ask open-ended questions</li><li>- don't agree/disagree</li><li>- use neutral words</li></ul>	"Can you tell me more."
Clarifying	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. to assist speaker in providing useful information</li><li>2. to get more information</li><li>3. to help speaker see other points of view</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ask open-ended questions</li><li>- surface "yes, but..." resistance</li><li>- keep asking questions until details are sufficiently clear</li></ul>	"When did this happen?"
Restating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. to show you heard and understood what was said</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- restate basic ideas, facts</li></ul>	"Let me see if I "In listening to you I think "I'm hearing you say" "It sounds like that... makes you feel..."
Reflecting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. to show that you understand how the person felt/feels</li><li>2. to help the person evaluate his/her own feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- reflect the speaker's basic feelings</li></ul>	"You seem very upset."
Summarizing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. to review progress</li><li>2. to pull important ideas, facts and feelings together</li><li>3. to establish a basis for further discussion</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- restate major ideas expressed including feelings</li></ul>	"These seem to be the key ideas you've expressed."
Validating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. to show respect</li><li>2. to put into context for speaker the way their emotions affect the conflict</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- acknowledge value of their issues and feelings</li><li>- show appreciation for their efforts and actions</li></ul>	"I appreciate your willingness to resolve this matter."



HMS/HSDM/HSPH OMBUDS OFFICE  
© Melissa Brodrick, Ombudsperson, [melissa\\_brodrick@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:melissa_brodrick@hms.harvard.edu)  
164 Longwood Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02115  
617-432-4040 (Ombuds line) 617-432-4041 (office line)