

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- **Stop talking!** Remember, you cannot listen if you are speaking.
- **Pay attention!** Give your full attention to the speaker. You cannot communicate if both parties are not actively involved in the process.
- **Read nonverbal cues.** Along with hearing and processing the words of the speaker, you should pay careful attention to the nonverbal language being communicated. Watch for eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture changes, and any physical responses (i.e., fidgeting).
- **Ask questions.** A good way to ensure that you have accurately understood the message is to ask questions.
- **Resist distractions.** Stop doodling! Do not shuffle papers, draw, or doodle when you are listening.
- **Don't interrupt!** Even though you may get angry or upset by something the speaker says, do not interrupt. Let the speaker finish, and resist the temptation to focus on your emotional response to the speaker's words.
- **Open your mind.** Try to look at the situation from the speaker's point of view and not just your own. Be flexible.
- **Paraphrase.** Use your own words to mirror what you have heard. Restating information in your own words helps you to remember what you have heard.