



ACTIVE LISTENING

This strategy is suggested in the 14-16 BrainWaves lesson:

Talking to friends about mental health.

About active listening

Active listening involves paying close attention to what someone is saying and demonstrating this by using both verbal and non-verbal cues. This includes an attentive body posture, acknowledgment of the concerns expressed, encouragement to continue speaking and checking meaning where necessary. It is important that the listener does not interrupt with their own opinions, give unasked for advice or be judgmental.

The scientific evidence behind active listening

Research conducted at the University of Reading showed that engaged listening techniques (such as eye contact, nodding and using key words to praise openness) helps teenagers when they admit bad behaviour and share hurt feelings with their parents. The study revealed that being more engaged while listening made the teenagers feel more authentic and connected and more likely to lead to a good outcome for teenagers' wellbeing:

- University of Reading. [Attentive listening helps teens open up. study finds.](#) ScienceDaily, 4 June 2021.

You can find further details about this study here:

- Weinstein et al (2021). [Parental listening when adolescents self-disclose: A preregistered experimental study.](#) Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 209:105178 DOI: 10.1016/j.jecp.2021.105178

A further article that may be useful in this context:

- Bodie et al (2015). [The Role of "Active Listening" in Informal Helping Conversations: Impact on Perceptions of Listener Helpfulness, Sensitivity, and Supportiveness and Disclosal, Emotional Improvement.](#) Western Journal of Communication, 79:2, 151-173, DOI: 10.1080/10570314.2014.943429

Further reading

This website discusses why good communication is an important skill and provides tips for being a good active listener:

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mh/mentalhealth_activelistening.html