



Lean In and Listen Fully



When people you care about are distressed and overwhelmed, one of the best things you can do is give them your whole attention and listen.

Here are some best practices in “active listening.”

- Create a physical space that offers privacy and comfort or take a walk side by side.
- Position your body so it communicates openness (e.g., get on their level, unfold your arms and legs, lean in, make eye contact)
- Ask “open ended” questions that invite the other person to tell you stories or more elaborate descriptions (e.g., “Can you tell me more about what you are going through? Describe your experience to me so I understand.”)
- Suspend judgment and problem-solving. DO NOT GIVE ADVICE.
- Reflect back feelings you notice (e.g., “That sounds very frustrating.” “You seem very sad about this.”)
- Summarize key phrases and points. (e.g., “Let me see if I’ve heard you correctly. First XYZ happened, then XYZ, and now XYZ. Did I get it right?”)



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