

# EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

**Purpose:** While active listening techniques (like nodding or repeating back words) help show attention, effective listening is about creating a space where participants feel safe to go deeper. It's where trust grows and meaningful conversations happen.

## 1

### HOLD SPACE WITH INTENTIONAL SILENCE

Silence is more than the absence of talking—it's an invitation.

Why it matters: Pausing shows patience and respect, giving youth time to gather thoughts or feelings without feeling rushed.

Tip: If someone stops speaking, wait a slow count of five. Often, that space allows them to share more.

## 2

### LISTEN WITH YOUR BODY

What you do physically often speaks louder than words.

Why it matters: Open, relaxed posture and warm eye contact signal safety and acceptance.

Try this: Uncross your arms, lean slightly forward, and keep your face soft. Notice how participants respond.

## 3

### USE GENTLE ECHOES AND INVITATIONS

Instead of jumping to solve or advise, mirror back key words or feelings to encourage deeper sharing.

Examples:

- "Sounds like that was hard for you..."
- "You felt left out?"
- "Tell me more about what that was like."