



LISTEN

Our world is hurting and so are our teens. With so much emotional weight to carry and so little access to the regular comforts and safety of small groups and youth group, how do we as youth leaders help?

We may not be able visit them but...

We CAN listen

ACTIVE LISTENING THROUGH HARDSHIP

One of the most important skills in helping any individual through emotional trauma, grief, frustration or sadness is active listening skills. Active listening can help take the emphasis off conflict and help students productively process their emotions.

It will take some time and some effort but the results are worth it!

READY TO GIVE IT A GO?

- 1. PAY ATTENTION** Stop what you are doing, put down the phone and tune in. This helps you focus and shows your student that they are worth your attention.
- 2. REMAIN NEUTRAL** While listening it is best to withhold judgement and any suggestions you might have. This can be hard but it could be the difference maker in your student considering you a safe place.
- 3. REFLECT EMOTION** Be attuned to what they are feeling and reflect the appropriate emotion. This shows them that you get it and that you're in it with them.
- 4. OBSERVE BODY LANGUAGE** Your student's body language can give you helpful clues on how they're feeling and how to move forward in conversation.
- 5. LISTEN FOR FEELINGS** Be sure to note feelings represented in their story and those felt at present. They may not always know how they are feeling, so having someone else recognize it for them could really help.
- 6. ASK QUESTIONS** Don't be afraid to ask deep or probing questions. Sometimes that's just what's needed. Asking the right questions can be foundational in helping them work through complicated feelings and emotions.
- 7. CLARIFY** Your student may say something that you interpreted very differently but you won't know unless you ask. Clarify regularly through the conversation to make sure you're tracking with your student.
- 8. SUMMARIZE** Summarize your conversation, include important moments and significant statements. If you identified a necessary action, this is a good time to mention it again to make sure it's still a good idea.

BEFORE SIGNING OFF, take a few minutes to hold up your student in prayer. Use the information learned from active listening and bring their needs before the Lord.

