



6. Importance of Listening

BVPT-104: English & Communication

Unit 2: Fundamentals of English Communication

Chapter 2: Importance of Listening

Topic: Active Listening Techniques and Their Role in Effective Communication

What Is Listening?

Listening is not just hearing sounds—it's actively paying attention, understanding, and responding appropriately to what the other person is saying.

In the healthcare field, especially physiotherapy, listening well can mean the difference between a good and a poor outcome.

Why Is Listening Important in Physiotherapy?

As a physiotherapist, you must:

- Understand the patient's **pain, concerns, and goals**.
- Identify **emotional cues** that affect treatment adherence.
- Build a **trusting relationship** that encourages healing.
- Avoid **miscommunication** that may harm the patient.

What Is Active Listening?

Active listening means fully concentrating on what the patient says, both verbally and non-verbally, without interrupting or judging. It involves:

- **Hearing the message**
- **Understanding the meaning**
- **Responding appropriately**

Active Listening Techniques

Technique	What It Means	Example in Clinic
Maintaining eye contact	Shows you are present and engaged	Looking at the patient while they describe their pain
Nodding and facial expressions	Non-verbal cues to show attentiveness	Nodding when a patient shares their experience
Avoiding interruptions	Letting the person finish their thoughts before responding	Wait till the patient explains before giving advice



Technique	What It Means	Example in Clinic
Paraphrasing	Repeating the message in your own words to confirm understanding	"So you're saying the pain increases after walking?"
Clarifying questions	Asking questions to remove doubt	"When you say stiff, do you mean tight or painful?"
Summarising	Recapping the main points to confirm you got it right	"To summarise, your pain worsens at night, right?"
Empathetic responses	Acknowledge emotions and concerns	"I understand how frustrating that must feel."

□ How Active Listening Improves Communication

Without Active Listening

Misunderstanding the patient's problem
Giving wrong or incomplete instructions
Patient feels ignored or anxious
Treatment becomes less effective

With Active Listening

Clear understanding of symptoms and history
Giving instructions that match the patient's needs
Patient feels valued, leading to better cooperation
Patient is motivated to follow advice and improve

□ Practice Activity: Spot the Listener

Read the two responses and decide which is active listening:

□□ Patient: "I feel scared every time I try to walk without support."

A: "You'll be fine. Just keep doing the exercises."

B: "It's natural to feel scared. Can you tell me when you feel most unsteady?"

□ Correct: **B** uses empathy, reassurance, and invites further sharing.

□ Quick Tips for Physiotherapy Students

- **Before a session**, clear your mind and focus fully on the patient.
- **During the session**, stay silent when the patient speaks. Listen with your ears and eyes.
- **After the session**, reflect: "Did I truly understand what the patient said?"

□ Take-Home Points

- **Listening is as important as speaking** in communication.
- Active listening builds trust and improves treatment success.
- Practice simple techniques like **paraphrasing**, **eye contact**, and **empathetic feedback**.
- In a busy clinical setting, **good listeners are rare—but highly valued**.