



# DEVELOPING TOGETHER

## SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

This tool can be used to help students to develop awareness and understanding of some of the skills used in actively listening to people. They could be asked to identify as many skills as they can, which would be regarded as demonstrating active listening, and then the following list could be explored with them. Encourage them to reflect on their own practice, or that of those around them, to identify examples of as many of these skills as possible. This may also help to identify areas of development, which could be addressed through supervision, training or experiential learning. To supplement this activity you could revert to Trevithick's (2014) Lexicon of Social Work Skills and Interventions (separate doc).

### **Active Listening Skills**

1. Remembering the importance and impact of the setting and the general physical environment
2. Minimising the possibility of interruptions and distractions
3. Being as natural, spontaneous and relaxed as possible
4. Being as open, intuitive, empathetic and self-aware as possible
5. Avoiding the dangers of preconceptions, stereotyping or labelling, or making premature judgements or evaluations
6. Having an open and attentive body orientation or posture
7. Maintaining appropriate physical distance
8. Maintaining eye contact
9. Being aware of own distracting mannerisms and behaviour
10. Paying attention to non-verbal communication and possible meanings thereof
11. Being aware of people needing to find their own words in their own time
12. Allowing for and using silence
13. Picking up and following cues
14. Avoiding vague, unclear and ambiguous comments
15. Being sensitive to the overall mood of the interaction, including what is not being communicated
16. Listening for the emotional content and adapting questions as appropriate
17. Remembering the importance of tone, yours and the service user's, particularly in relation to sensitive or painful issues
18. Checking and seeking feedback wherever possible and appropriate
19. Being aware of the importance of timing, particularly where strong feelings are concerned