Active Listening Activity

Goal:
- To develop or enhance active listening skills in youth.

Have Ready:
- A subsequent worksheet package per youth.

Directions:
- Option 1: Hand out the worksheet for active listening as homework, and gather after youth have thought through each scenario.
- Option 2: Hand out the worksheet for youth to fill out during a specific time together.
  - After the youth have filled out the worksheet, gather into a circle and have a go-round, where each youth shares their answer. (Each time around the circle is only dealing with one question).
  - As the facilitator, allow youth to discuss what may work, and what can hinder listening before jumping in to provide information. After debriefing the answers, move on to the next question.

Helpful Hint: You may want to explain paraphrasing, perception checks, how to ask an open ended question, summarizing, and I-messages before you hand out the worksheet, depending on what information your group has been exposed to. Also, you may want to write out the definitions on the board. If your group has literacy issues, you may want to work on the questions together or do them orally.
Active Listening Worksheet

*Paraphrase* the following statements. This means putting into your own words what someone else said.

**Example:** I used to go out with my friends all the time, but lately I don’t want to. They’ve started drinking beer a lot more and I’m not into that. It seems like they can’t have a good time without it. I don’t enjoy myself anymore when I’m with them.  
**Paraphrase:** In the past, you had a great time going out with friends. Right now, however, you don’t feel like hanging out with them because you don’t like drinking. Whenever you do go out with them you don’t have fun and it seems like they need to drink to have fun.

1. I told my supposed-to-be best friend a secret about what happened with me and my partner last weekend. Now everyone in my whole school knows about it.

2. I’m really into this guy at school. We’re probably going to see each other at a party this weekend, but there’s going to be another person there that likes him too. I don’t know how he feels about me.

**Develop a perception check statement for the following, showing that you understand the feelings involved.**

**Example:** I have worked very hard on the homework and I still don’t understand the math. I just try and try and nothing seems to help.  
**Paraphrase:** So it sounds like you are frustrated because you worked so hard on your homework and you still don’t understand.

1. I told my supposed-to-be best friend a secret about what happened with me and my partner last weekend. Now everyone in my whole school knows about it.

2. I’m really into this guy at school. We’re probably going to see each other at a party this weekend, but there’s going to be another person there that likes him too. I don’t know how he feels about me.
Create an open-ended question for each of the following. Open-ended questions can’t be answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’. They invite the other person to share more about what’s going on for them.

**Example:** I took a pregnancy test three weeks ago and it said negative. The doctor told me to come back for another one just to confirm the result. I just went back and this time it came out positive.

**Open-Ended Questions:** “What does this test result mean for you?” or “How do you feel about the result of that test?”

1. I’m itching down there and I think I have an STI. I don’t know what to do!”

2. My friend went out with her boyfriend the other night and he really pressured her to have sex with him. When she told her parents about it they blamed it on her for wearing a short skirt.

Respond to the following statements with an open-ended question that would bring up more specific information.

1. “I don’t like that sort of thing …”

2. “They never listen to my suggestions or to what I have to say.”

3. “That’s just the kind of person she is.”

4. “All men are like that.”

5. “I really hate him.”
Summarize the following problem:
My Dad is an alcoholic. I never know what kind of mood he’ll be in when I get home. He may be drunk, mad, passed out, or anything. My Mom gives him all her attention. She worries a lot that Dad will get fired and wonders what will happen after that. She doesn’t really seem to care about what happens in my life, at school, at home, or with my friends. I think my parents don’t care about me and wish I wasn’t around because I just cost them more money.

Create an I-Message in response to the following scenarios. An I-Message statement shows your side of the situation and how you feel, and doesn’t threaten the other person.

Example: Monica heard from someone that her friend Alexis was trying to steal Monica’s boyfriend.

Monica’s I-Message to Alexis: I feel awkward because I heard a rumor about my boyfriend. Will you help me get to the bottom of this?

1. Zack and you have just gotten out of a meeting at school. Just as he’s leaving he says to you, “I want to go get a coke from the machine. Do you have any change?” This is the third time he’s asked you for money.

2. Abby has come to talk to you. She seems upset and is playing nervously with some tissues. Finally she says, “You’ve got to promise not to tell anybody.” Before you can say anything, she blurts out, “I’m pregnant and I can’t have this baby. If I have to have it I’ll kill myself.”

3. It is Thursday night and you have a difficult exam tomorrow. You’ve been so busy with other activities that you haven’t had the chance to study yet. Just as you open your books to start to cram, your cell phone rings. Carlie says that she needs to talk to you about something that’s really bugging her. When you explain that you would love to talk with her tomorrow but can’t tonight because of your exam, Carlie says, “you said I could phone you any time I needed to but I guess you didn’t really mean it.”