

## **Active Listening**

In general, you will make more progress obtaining information by encouraging family members, showing empathy, and allowing family members to talk freely than by bombarding them with questions. This doesn't mean you sit back and let everyone talk about whatever they want. Skilled consultants always assume an active role in listening, continually making conscious decisions about how to allow family members to express themselves and conveying those decisions through the use of active listening techniques.

Let's review the components of active listening:

1. Limit how much you say.
2. Be comfortable with silence (gaps in the conversation).
3. Keep the conversation going by letting family members talk.
4. Acknowledge what is being said.
5. Offer statements of empathy and understanding.
6. Be aware of nonverbal cues.