

# Reflective Listening Skills

Reflective listening skills provide a mirror to the person speaking. The idea is to reflect what the person is saying. Reflective listening includes four levels:

- **Paraphrasing** is a short response that affirms the content of what the speaker was saying. Paraphrasing says the same thing the speaker is saying, using the listener's words. It ensures that the listener is hearing the message correctly.
- **Reflecting feelings** is a response that focuses not just on content but also on underlying feelings. The listener concentrates on the body language, tone, and feeling words used by the speaker. Statements that reflect feelings can begin with "You feel sad because . . ."
- **Reflecting meaning** is a response that suggests a possible meaning being conveyed. The listener expresses it as an invitation for clarification. Using this response is a way for listeners to make sure that they are correct in their assumption about underlying feelings and tone. Statements that reflect meaning can begin with "It sounds like you are . . ."
- **Summary reflection** is a response whereby the listener summarizes what she or he has heard the speaker say—not the listener's opinion on the issue. Summary reflection is used to let the speaker know that she or he is understood. Summary reflections may begin with "What I have heard you saying is . . ."