



Sexual Assault
DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE
Enhancing Sexual Assault Services

ROLE PLAYS FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

WORKSHEET

We can create a space where survivors we are working with feel safe to share their stories and their truths by using active listening skills.

Active listening is:

- *a foundational skill used by sexual assault advocates that supports the healing journey of survivors*
- *listening to not only the words that are being spoken but also to the survivor's tone of voice, facial expressions, and other non-verbal communication cues*
- *the act of bearing witness to a survivor's experiences and offering validation*
- *holding space for a survivor to respond and process what happened to them*
- *judgement free and safe space for all emotions to be expressed*



The following role plays will help with practicing active listening advocacy skills and can be done in groups of two to three. For each role play, there is:

- **Role of Advocate** *(every participant will take a turn playing the role of the advocate)*
- **Role of Survivor** *(not everyone may feel comfortable in this role, which is okay. If there are others willing to play the role of survivor then the advocate role can switch between other participants so that everyone has a chance to practice)*
- **Role of Observer** *(the role of observer can be used if there are three participants)*

INSTRUCTIONS:

Role plays can be challenging and seem awkward at times, but we want to practice listening skills in a safe setting so that we feel more secure in real-world interactions. During the role plays, you will need to use a variety of active listening skills as you would in a real-life scenario.

- Select one role play and have the group read the role play.
- Decide the role each of the group members will take.
- Role plays should last between 5-10 minutes and should focus on practicing the active listening skills from the online learning tool.
- Switch roles and repeat.
- Process the role play, with the observer leading the discussion. [5-10 minutes]

PROCESSING QUESTIONS:

ROLE PLAYED	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Survivor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was helpful?• What might have been more helpful?
Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you think was helpful?• Where did you feel stuck?• What strategies can you think of now that might have helped?
Observer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did the person playing the advocate do that seemed to make the survivor feel heard?• What else did you notice?• What additional recommendations do you have for the advocate?

[ROLE PLAY #1]

Chad is a middle-aged white male who was sexually assaulted by his mother as a child. He comes to your office because his mother is now ill and he is responsible for her care, including transportation to the doctor, preparing meals, housecleaning, and personal hygiene care. He is feeling tremendous stress with this role in addition to his full-time job. The personal care of his mother has been especially distressing because it brings up feelings he had as a child. Chad thought about hiring someone else to care for his mother but he doesn't have the money. He constantly feels anxious and is having flashbacks about his abuse.



[ROLE PLAY #2]

Laura is a 40-year-old African American woman who has worked for a local company for the past 15 years and was promoted to a management position last year. Laura identifies as a lesbian, but she has not disclosed this to co-workers since she was concerned she would be treated differently. After her promotion was announced, she started receiving mail and phone messages calling her a lesbian and threatening to rape her. A month ago when leaving work late one night, a male co-worker attacked her in the stairwell and sexually assaulted her. She hasn't told anyone about the assault before today but came to your office because she hasn't been able to sleep or eat for days. She is worried that she might be fired since she has taken several sick days after the assault.



[ROLE PLAY #3]

Nadia is a white woman who calls the helpline one night after a nightmare. She shares that “something bad happened” two years ago with her faith leader. She states she did not think it was rape at the time since she did not think they would do something like that. She says she felt it was her fault that the incident occurred and excused the leader for their behavior thinking they were unable to help themselves. After the incident, she continued to attend the church, the only one of its denomination in the small town where she resides and where your advocacy program is located. She explains that she began to have bad dreams that were similar to what her faith leader did to her. Lately, the dreams have changed and she is thinking about things that occurred when she was a child. After disclosing all of this to a close friend, the friend said that what Nadia has experienced is rape, and that it sounds like Nadia is depressed and should talk to someone. Nadia doesn’t know how an advocate can help her but is willing to try anything.



[ROLE PLAY #4]

Lisa is a Chinese American woman who was sexually assaulted by a friend of the family when she was a teenager. She is now married and has two teenage girls and is terrified that they will be sexually assaulted. She is afraid to talk to them about her concerns, and no one in her family knows about her experience with sexual assault. She has become hyper-vigilant and doesn’t let her daughters talk to anyone outside their immediate family. She is calling to find out what she can do to keep her children safe.

