Ten Skills for Empathetic Listening

1. **Attending or Acknowledging:** Providing verbal or nonverbal awareness of the other person
   - Make eye contact.
   - “Ah ah…”
   - “Yes, I see…”

2. **Restating or Paraphrasing:** Responding to a person’s basic verbal message
   - “So you think that…”
   - “If I understand you correctly…”
   - “Let me try to summarize what I think you are telling me…”

3. **Reflecting:** Reflecting feelings, experiences or content that has been heard or perceived through cues.
   - “So you felt…”
   - “I can tell that you are feeling…”
   - “It seems like a very difficult situation…”

4. **Interpreting:** Offering a tentative interpretation about the other person’s feelings, desires or meanings.
   - “It seems to me like you are…”
   - “So you would like to resolve the conflict in the simplest way possible by…”
   - “You mean you want…”

5. **Summarizing, Synthesizing:** Bringing together in some way feelings and experiences; providing focus.
   - “From everything you are telling me, I can tell you are…”
   - “So your main issue is…”
   - “You have identified these issues for me…”

6. **Probing:** Questioning in a supportive way that requests more information or that attempts to clear up confusions.
   - “I want to make sure I’ve got this straight…”
   - “To help me better tell your story, can I put those events in the correct order?”

7. **Giving Feedback:** Sharing perceptions of the other person’s ideas or feelings; disclosing relevant personal information.
   - “I would feel the same way…”
   - “I have been through a similar experience…”
   - “It’s understandable that you feel…”

8. **Supporting:** Showing warmth and caring in your own way.
   - “It’s great that you called us…”
   - “You’ve been through a lot, and I’m going to do my best to get you the right help.”
   - “You did the right thing by reporting it…”

9. **Checking Perceptions:** Finding out if the person’s interpretations and perceptions are valid and accurate.
   - “Did someone else witness this event?”
   - “How do you know how long it took?”
   - “Are other people affected the same way?”

10. **Being Quiet:** Giving the other person time to think as well as to talk
    - “Can you think of anything else?”
    - Pause between questions.
    - Let the other person finish his/her thoughts and sentences