Active listening techniques include:
- Being fully present in the conversation.
- Showing interest by practicing good eye contact.
- Noticing (and using) non-verbal cues.
- Asking open-ended questions to encourage further responses.
- Paraphrasing and reflecting back what has been said.

YouTube Training Videos (total time is15 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wUCyjiyXdg   (6:14)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PFX23Ynkfs   (7:20)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_-rNd7h6z8   (1:41)

Active Listening Skills

Why active listening is important, and how to do it.

"You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time." —M. Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled.*

Active listening is a way of listening that involves full <u>attention</u> to what is being said for the primary purpose of understanding the speaker. It is an important skill set for many different circumstances, ranging from the therapist's office to the business world. If we are not listening actively, we are likely to miss the real message.

In my experience as a clinician, the ability to use active listening is essential for the long-term happiness of most couples. Attachment Theory has helped us understand that the most basic emotional needs of human beings include the need to be heard and the need to feel important to our partners. One of the most common complaints that I hear during couples counseling sessions is one partner saying to the other: "You never listen to me!"

Social science research also evidences the crucial importance of active listening. Psychologist Willard Harley identified the 10 most common emotional needs of individuals in partner relationships. Among these top 10 was the need for "intimate conversation." He described this need as being met by having discussions to inform or ask questions, discussing topics of mutual interest, and the willingness to listen to each other. More to the point, intimate conversation required giving and receiving undivided attention.

How to be an active listener:

1. Listen without making judgments or taking a position on an issue. Gain an understanding of the situation from the other's point of view.

2. Allow the speaker to finish thoughts without interruption. This usually includes brief periods of silence, such as a few seconds. It may take some practice before being able to know how long to wait before making some type of response. If unsure, it is always better to wait too long rather than speak too soon and interrupt the speaker's thoughts.

3. Show that your attention is focused. Make eye contact, lean in towards the speaker when your interest peaks, and share any humor with a smile or other natural response. Appropriate mirroring of their mood if they are discussing a sad event, you sound mirror the understanding of the seriousness and not make light with humor.

4. Repeat what you have heard to check for accuracy. Use the speaker's exact words when in doubt that you have heard accurately; more often, it is better to paraphrase what was said.

5. Ask questions as needed when you don't understand what the speaker is trying to communicate, particularly when you're trying to grasp the main point of their statement.

6. Give a short summary to indicate that you have heard and understood what was said.

7. Optional: As the final step, but not sooner, you may choose to share similar situations that you've experienced or your own views about the issue. You may even share a completely different opinion than that expressed, as long as that sharing is done after you have understood what was communicated to you.

What to avoid during active listening:

1. Interrupting a sentence. Even if there is a long pause, one should first encourage the completion of the thought by the speaker.

2. Failing to make eye contact. Breaks from eye contact are normal and expected, but a total lack of eye contact communicates a lack of attention.

3. Rushing the speaker. This can be a challenge, particularly when the speaker goes into excessive or unrelated details to tell their story. Do your best to politely encourage them to move along with the point.

4. Getting distracted by other thoughts, or events nearby, and losing focus. Daydreaming while pretending to listen is probably only going to frustrate the speaker.

5. Over focus upon certain details or asking about minor details that distract from the speaker's point.

6. Changing the subject abruptly. This includes interjecting an account of "something similar that happened to me."

7. Making jokes or sarcastic comments which distract from the points being made. Save the humor for later in the conversation.

8. Listening to decide what your reply should be. This is a common risk when the speaker is expressing a complaint and the listener begins to feel defensive. The natural tendency would be to shift focus to "how will I defend myself from this accusation?" or "how will I prove them wrong?" If you have actively listened, you may learn that you don't need to defend yourself. Your partner may not be blaming you for anything. If blame has been thrown at you, you will have your chance to speak your own thoughts after you've listened to the complaint.

"There is a difference between truly listening and waiting for your turn to talk." —Ralph Waldo Emerson.

As the great American poet Emerson suggested, you will have your turn to talk. There is really nothing to gain in a friendship by skipping the first step: active listening. Very often, the friend who needs to be heard is simply needing to vent some frustration and to know that you care enough to listen, even if there's nothing you can do to "fix the problem." Listening attentively may be the best thing you can do to create a more satisfying friendship.

We all need to be heard by those closest to us, regardless of whether we're right or wrong, and rational or irrational. Whatever the circumstances, the process of listening has a high likelihood of transforming the relationship in a positive way.

When planning for membership visitation: Visitation team of at least two people. They need training in active listening skills. Conduct a pre-contact check on health concerns for visit, covid-19 need for mask wearing? Note, if the member has passed away the Secretary will need the date of death for the members masonic record.

During visit if certain needs arise, remember to advise about the **Masonic Pathways – Outreach and Member Care Program**, "For Michigan Masons of all ages and their families who are living and active in their own communities, there are services available through the Outreach and Member Care department, such as the Live Better at Home. Live Better at Home is available to provide information, referrals, and support to Masons and their families, no matter what the need. To learn more about programs and services available to assist you and your family, contact the **Outreach and Member Care department at (800) 321-9357."**

Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations: Definitions & Examples

Vulnerable populations are groups of people in society who are at a disadvantage. Due to this disadvantage, it is more difficult for vulnerable groups to access healthcare, education, and good jobs. People in these groups are more likely to be harmed and to have chronic psychological and physical illnesses than most other populations. Examples of vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to: people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, people in the LGBTQIA community, elderly and very young people, uninsured people, homeless people, and people with low incomes.

The three major categories of risk to vulnerable people are social risk, physical risk, and psychological risk. **Social risk** refers to the bias and reduced opportunities that people face when they have low incomes or low levels of formal education. **Physical risk** is related to the fact that people with high physical needs, such as pregnant women or people with a disability, face additional obstacles to accessing healthcare and other resources. **Psychological risk** affects people with mental illnesses or who are in conditions that may lead them to develop mental illness. Many psychological disabilities make it much more difficult for people to recognize symptoms and seek medical treatment. Common examples include anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, and ADHD.

What is a Vulnerable Population?

- **Vulnerable population definition**: Groups of people who are at a disadvantage due to a characteristic they have or a status they inhabit.
- **Population at risk definition**: Groups of people who are at a greater risk of exposure to a specific negative outcome than the general population.

The definition of **what is a vulnerable population** varies between different situations or events. In general, groups of people who-- because of some circumstance of their birth, due to misfortune, or occupying an oppressed status-- are considered vulnerable populations. These people are more vulnerable to disease, malnutrition, prejudice, and threats to their safety and security than non-vulnerable populations in society. They have less reliable access to healthcare, education, and income opportunities.

Some of the groups most identified as vulnerable are racial and ethnic minorities, people with low incomes, homeless people, people in prison, people with physical or intellectual disabilities, people in the LGBTQAI community, and elderly people, however, this list is not comprehensive.

What Vulnerability Means for Health- In the field of healthcare, vulnerable populations are at a higher risk of being in a state of poor health or who have less access to healthcare. People in vulnerable populations are less likely to seek treatment for an illness or injury. Their recovery times and rates of full recovery are much lower. They're more likely to suffer from chronic conditions and less likely to return to clinics or hospitals for recommended follow-up care. They are also less likely to fill prescriptions and take medications as directed by a doctor. They experience mental illness more frequently and more intensely. Vulnerable populations more frequently experience abuse by their caregivers. Most concerning, though, is the fact that vulnerable populations die at a higher rate than others from both preventable and non-preventable injuries and illnesses.

Types of Vulnerability- The individual reasons that someone may find themselves in a vulnerable position in society are too numerous to list, but we can identify three main types of vulnerability, or risk, factors. These are physical, psychological, and social risks. Individuals may be susceptible to more than one kind of risk.

Physical Risk- People who have higher physical needs, such as elderly people, people with disabilities, and pregnant women, are vulnerable to physical risks. These include issues of mobility and access. Vulnerable people are also at a higher risk of being harmed physically by accidents or by other people with malicious intent.

Psychological Risk- Autism, bipolar disorder, ADHD, PTSD, depression, and anxiety are just a few of the many mental illnesses that can put people at a higher risk of harm. People with a diminished cognitive or intellectual capacity are also more vulnerable. Someone who experiences an alternate reality may not recognize symptoms of disease or dangerous situations, putting them in harm's way.

Social Risk- People with low incomes or low education are at a greater risk of harm. This also includes homeless people and people who are unemployed or those who have jobs that are seen as low-status or undesirable. Someone who lacks resources may not be able to afford to take time off work to go to the hospital while homeless people are sometimes seen as less deserving of care and protection.

Care and Support of Vulnerable Individuals and Groups

The vulnerable group includes a group of man, woman or child who are suffering from mental disorder due to homelessness, environmental disaster, different types of violence and discrimination. The bad conditions of the economic situation are also included here because due to this a person can suffer from vulnerability.

Persons, or a group of people who suffer from the vulnerable condition are often physically unfit because mental health is correlated with physical health. This essay discusses the caring system of vulnerable conditions. Their way of remedies, factors affecting people towards vulnerable conditions, reducing strategies and the identification of symptoms all are represented here. Therefore, from this essay, the overall condition of vulnerability and their remedies are introduced by the author.

Vulnerable means a condition which occurs due to age, homelessness, and neglected, abused and physical disabilities people are treated and give them care. Vulnerability means the situation which is suffered by a person or a group of people in a bad condition by which a mental disorder can occur. A bad situation can arise due to feeling alone, neglected, abused or poverty. This situation happened basically due to the isolation of the people. People and people can become very much stuck due to insecure feelings.

People or groups who are suffering from the vulnerable condition is detected in some ways. They are not identified by normal watching. They have some symptoms which can help to detect out the vulnerable groups. People who are suffering from poverty and have a lack of food and shelter are generally included in this section. Insufficient clothes and a hygienic environment are one of the important reasons for suffering people in vulnerability. Women and children who generally work for the cleansing purpose of human excreta are also suffered from this situation. Generally, people from minority areas and black suffer from various types of discrimination. They don't have enough money for education, food, medicine, and clothes and therefore they suffer from discrimination from the many of the healthy and wealthy people of society. This type of vulnerability is considered as an ethnicity problem. Lack of money tends them not to look after their health and other essentials.

The Mental Capacity Act, 2005 is created to help the young generation who are not able to take decisions. This act is basically legal support for that kind of person. It maintains some principles. According to the act it is said that persons who are unable to make decision or taking decision is not helpful for them are defiantly under this act. Sometimes the person who are not capable for control herself or himself then this type of laws is implemented. This act also talked about the regulation which is based on the freedom of human beings.

According to the NHS guidelines, they support after-hospital care. After hospital care is the most important thing which is required to support the sick person. They provide various charitable services. Home care service and various social services will be provided by them.

There exist some groups of people who are aged and physically unfit. They do not have any nearby ones to look after them. These types of people are also included in the vulnerability group. Various chronic diseases attack a certain group of people. Various types of myths are present in society and society considers many diseases as per the communicable diseases. The problem is that people who are suffering from such types of diseases are ignored and neglected by society.

People who are abused from various accidents are also neglected by society. Therefore, these are the conditions by which people can make sure that vulnerable groups have belonged from such type of area.

Various factors are present which influenced a certain amount of people towards vulnerability. The factors which are affecting society to insist people towards the vulnerability are as follows:

1. Poverty is one of the main reasons which tend people to the vulnerability group. This type of factor occurred due to the economic discrimination over education, money, and other social essentials. The vulnerability group created due to poverty is generally found in the developing countries and the flooded or natural disaster full area. Many people fulfill the basic needs of their life by doing agriculture in rural areas. They do not have enough money to fulfill the needs of their life or live life in a comfortable way.

2. Livelihood is another factor of vulnerability because there exist various kinds of people who do not maintain their life in a healthy way. The urban areas poor people are living in an area which is not perfect for normal living condition and is unhealthy. Therefore, this is one main reason to make people in vulnerable group members.
3. Various types of cultural beliefs are present here. In the group of minor people, there is limited presence of education, therefore, the beliefs in various superstitions and that is why some of them are neglected by society.
4. Inequality is one of the main reasons for suffering the people in vulnerability. Inequality is present everywhere in society. Sex, gender, profession, lack of education are several factors where discrimination is present.
5. Female and male discrimination is a factor in our society. Women have suffered from various discrimination which include some of them are included in the vulnerable condition.
6. Homelessness is an important reason for suffering vulnerable conditions. People who do not have basic needs of life are suffering from various vulnerabilities.
7. People who are abused from physical torture also suffered from this group of people. Mental health condition is gradually decreasing and PTSD.
8. Physically unfit people are also suffering from vulnerable conditions. Basically, aged men and women who are not physically fit are suffering from this problem, lack of routine, purpose, and social interaction.

Therefore, it is seen that various factors are present that impact vulnerability of persons or groups.
Vulnerability occurs due to various reasons related to physical condition, socio-economic condition, and environmental factors. **However, there exist various prevention methods which are maintained by the various organizations to reduce vulnerability. The reducing factors** are as follows:

1. There exist various types of conditions which help to reduce vulnerability from society. People who are from minority areas are suffering from the various types of abuse effects. Some parents are addicted by drugs and the alcohol this type of parent's abuse their child. The legal system must be involved to be protective, and society has to be concerned about keeping a healthy environment in the house for these children, so that the mind of the children becomes happy and tension free.
2. Aged people who are suffering from various chronic diseases must be kept under very much care. Family members usually ignore these types of people and that is such a condition happens. Family support and love are very much essential for isolated people. Therefore, people who include the vulnerable group and the main reason is isolation and ignored by family members are very much required the presence of family members or dependable friends who can be there to assist them in various ways.
3. Different diseases are considered as communicable diseases. People must be aware of some facts and judge them after telling them it is a communicable disease. Therefore, people don't ignore sick people. They must help them and make sure that they get enough treatment.
4. People who are homeless also suffer from invulnerability. Therefore, family members and the government must be arranged for their basic needs, so that they cannot suffer from the diseases.

There exist various types of acts which maintain the rules and regulations against the abuse of children, young people, and adults. Children are mostly vulnerable by abuse and discrimination. Therefore, the acts over children discrimination and abuse are very strong. Children abusing are divided into different parts. In children abusing them includes sexual abusing, physically abusing, and emotional abusing and neglected. The children act 1998 and the children act 2004 are mainly created against various types of discrimination over children and young people. The care act 2004 is also built for the caring of children and protests the many types of abuse factors. There exist various laws which are against discrimination and abuse factors. The Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Human Right Act 1998, Act over Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding Violence Crime Act 2004, and the Victim Act 2004 all are very helpful to people who are from a vulnerable situation. Therefore, society must be very concerned and must help them to reduce the situation.

Multi-agencies working together is a type of environment where a team works together against a particular problem. Here in this essay, the vulnerable people are suffering from various challenges to society. Therefore, the various multi-agency working team must be helping them and decrease the abusing situation of the people. There exist various types of paths which are adopted by the multi-agency working team. One of the most important planning procedures, by which a team can overcome the problem easily. There exist six key principles which help the team to reduce the problem in their society. The key parameters are empowerment, proportionality, prevention, protection, partnership, accountability.

- **Empowerment** is the parameter by which people can influence to keep them happy and healthy. They are also influenced to keep their own decision and think about their future.
- **Proportionality** means that they should be aware people not to keep any types of discrimination in society.
- **Prevention** is taken because a bad situation can occur at any time. Therefore, awareness is very important before occurs any types of bad situation.
- **Protection** gives them self-confidence so that they can feel very comfortable and safe. This gives them mental satisfaction.
- **Partnership** is one of the best conditions when they cannot feel isolated. The community is helpful to reduce any types of problems without any types of fear.
- **Accountability** keeps people in a safeguarding situation.

Human trafficking is one of the most important and increasing attention incidents in the world. Women, men and children all suffer from these types of trafficking. Forced sex workers, forced labor and domestic abuse victims and any types of forced workers are under this section. Nowadays there exist various types of human trafficking methods. All men, women, and children all suffer from this situation. Force labor is from different areas like agriculture, factories, various industries and so on. Cleaning and hospitality workers are also the victims of human trafficking.

Domestic abuse is related to the abusing factors which are related to the harassment from those near the family members. Therefore, it is seen that female children are often sexually abused by the family members and that is why they feel insecure and isolated. Domestic abuse is not only their sexual abuse but it also from harassment physical torture and neglect. However, the people who are impacted from the sexual abasement are feeling isolated and depressed and that is why they are included in the vulnerability group. Women that are abused by men tend to have a lower educational background or available a community of emotional intelligent support. Therefore, the people who are from a healthy environment and have a healthy mentality have to help people who are suffering from domestic violence.

Homelessness is one of the most important factors which is affecting the people who are already going towards vulnerability. Homelessness happens when people are not economically strong. People who are affected by some environmental phenomena are also suffering in this condition because they lost everything in this natural disaster. Old people are also suffering from this situation because they are often neglected by family members and friends. Physically unhealthy or overweight people are also abused and make them homelessness in that they have no support system. Moreover, homelessness makes people isolated and very depressed. Therefore, people who are suffering from homelessness also suffer from bad mental condition and anxiety.

Analyzing the whole topic, it is concluded that vulnerability occurs due to the isolation situation and homelessness. Environmental disaster, poverty, and economic degradation are also the reasons for the vulnerability. The group or a person when suffering from this type of situation often gets physically unfit. **Caring about this type of person is done by giving them company and understanding their situation**. Therefore, it is said that the people who are in this type of bad condition are immediately required to find the solution and decrease the problems related to the vulnerability.

What You Need to Know About Visiting Others Who Are More Vulnerable During COVID-19

After several months of swapping in-person gatherings for video calls, you're probably *very* ready to see your close friends and family again.

But public health officials warn that the new coronavirus will be among us for some time. This means that individuals who are **high risk for developing a more severe case of COVID-19** should continue to be extra cautious, and that *everyone* must remain committed to **social distancing**, **wearing a cloth mask** and practicing **excellent hand hygiene**.

This may leave you wondering whether it's safe to see people who are more vulnerable, such as your parents, grandparents, or loved ones or **friends with chronic health conditions**.

If you're still considering socializing in person, here are three questions to ask yourself before visiting a family member or friend during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Is he or she high risk?
Anyone can get COVID-19, but some people are more likely to end up in the hospital, or even the ICU, while ill with this new virus.

Those at highest risk of developing severe illness include people who are over the age of 65, are immunocompromised or have one or more of the following underlying health conditions:

- Lung or Liver disease
- Moderate-to-severe asthma
- Advanced heart disease
- Diabetes or Obesity
- Chronic kidney disease

There are nuances to being high risk, though, and it's important to consider age in the context of a person's whole health. For instance, if your parent is a 65-year-old who is overweight and diabetic, he or she has a higher risk (and, therefore, should be more cautious) than a very healthy 65-year-old. If your 45-year-old sister has an immune deficiency, her health condition alone puts her at higher risk.

If your friend or family member is considered high risk, know that he or she is likely taking extra precautions to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic — including staying home as much as possible.

It's probably best to try to avoid contact with people whose immune system is compromised. This includes people who are undergoing certain cancer treatments, have recently had an organ transplant or bone marrow transplant, have poorly controlled HIV or AIDS or are taking high doses of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressant medications.

At the end of the day, there's nothing like seeing a loved one in person. But, remember, there are plenty of **digital tools to help you stay connected** with your family and friends who are more vulnerable to developing a severe case of COVID-19.

What's your likelihood of exposure to the virus?
It goes without saying, but you should avoid contact with others — *especially* those who are high risk — if you're sick.

But, if you're healthy and symptom-free, are you in clear? It depends.

Experts estimate that about 25% of people who are infected with coronavirus show no symptoms — but are still able to spread the virus. This means that you can be contagious even if you feel fine. The likelihood of unknowingly spreading COVID-19 increases as your likelihood of exposure to the virus increases.

If you're practicing social distancing, staying home as often as possible and wearing a cloth mask when you do go out, your likelihood of exposure to coronavirus is likely fairly low.

But if you work in a setting where you frequently interact with people who are sick, such as a hospital, or where social distancing is challenging, like a grocery store, your likelihood of exposure is likely higher. In addition, if you're not practicing social distancing, you may also have a higher likelihood of being exposed to coronavirus. Before visiting someone who is vulnerable, ask yourself: Does my job or lifestyle put me at higher risk of exposure to coronavirus? If the answer is "yes," consider a video call instead of an in-person visit.

What will your visit be like?
If you do decide to take the risk and visit a loved one or friend, plan for it to look quite a bit different than usual. You'll need to maintain six feet between yourself, your loved one and other guests, as well as avoid going into the person's home.

Here are things to consider keeping your vulnerable friend or loved one as safe as possible during your visit:

Socialize outside. Right now, it's best to avoid visiting with vulnerable loved ones indoors. The easiest place to maintain social distancing and avoid spreading the virus via commonly touched surfaces is in a large outdoor space like a backyard.

Visit by yourself or in a very small group. When planning a visit, try to keep it one-on-one. At the very least, you'll want to keep the gathering small and limit the number of households that are coming together. You may also want to consider wearing a mask as an added layer of protection — even if maintaining social distancing isn't a concern.

Don't share food or drinks. In fact, you may want to bring everything you might need during your visit. Think of it like a picnic — bringing your own food, drinks, eating utensils and hand sanitizer. Everything you bring should either be thrown out before leaving or taken home with you.

Avoid touching common surfaces whenever possible. While close contact is the most likely way to spread COVID-19, the virus can also survive on surfaces. Even during an outdoor gathering, you may find yourself heading indoors to use the restroom. While in a vulnerable person's home, be sure to limit the surfaces you touch and practice proper hand washing techniques.

Keep your visit short. You may want to spend all day catching up with your loved one, but the shorter your visit, the better. The more time you spend in close contact with someone, the greater the chance of spreading COVID-19 if you have it and don't yet know it.

During visit if certain needs arise, remember to advise about the **Masonic Pathways – Outreach and Member Care Program**, "For Michigan Masons of all ages and their families who are living and active in their own communities, there are services available through the Outreach and Member Care department, such as the Live Better at Home. Live Better at Home is available to provide information, referrals, and support to Masons and their families, no matter what the need. To learn more about programs and services available to assist you and your family, contact the **Outreach and Member Care department at (800) 321-9357."**

![Michigan Masons logo]

Outreach & Member Care

We're your trusted resource for connecting you to programs and services!

This service is available to all Michigan Masons and members of Order of the Eastern Star. No matter your age, where you choose to make your home, or whether calling for yourself or a loved one, we are here to help you access the information and help our members need. Our team of knowledgeable information and referral specialists are just a phone call away.

You might not need us today, but when you do, contact us. Specialists are available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Contact us at (800) 321-9357 or email us at masonsupport@michiganmasons.org.

(800) 321-9357

masonsupport@michiganmasons.org

Michigan Masons
1200 Wright Ave.
Alma, MI 48801

Your Masonic Resource Center is your trusted resource to help you find solutions to any hardships you or a lodge brother may experience.

This is a confidential and free membership benefit for all Masons, wives, widows, orphans, and members of the Order of the Easter Star. Our Member Care Specialists are experienced, professional staff with degrees and certifications in social work and human services fields. We can address needs including, but not limited to:

- Financial issues
- Health & Mental Health resources
- Health Insurance (Medicare, Medicaid, Part D)
- Basic Needs (Such as housing or food)
- Transportation
- Employment issues
- Legal Needs
- Family or Children's issues
- Senior / Elderly Needs
- Michigan Masonic Home information

Outreach & Member Care

MICHIGAN MASONS