

Demonstrating empathy

A leaflet for healthcare staff



Making conversations easier

Demonstrating empathy

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1. To understand
2. To communicate that understanding
3. To support and take action



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Demonstrating empathy

1. To understand

> Get

Tell me more

Go on

Take your time

That's ok

TIP

Get that it's emotion and tune into the emotion you detect. Go there. Give your presence. Drop your agenda or your urge to 'fix' and just listen. We do not need to resolve emotions. Respond with '*connection*' not information.



Communication skills

- ☐ Active listening
- ☐ Non-verbal behaviours
- ☐ Picking up on cues
- ☐ Mirror the patient
- ☐ Open questions
- ☐ Pauses
- ☐ Slow down
- ☐ Use silence
- ☐ Facilitation ("*What else?*")
- ☐ Non-judgemental response ("*That's ok*")
- ☐ Avoid closing down the person



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2. To communicate that understanding

> Identify

> Validate

*You sound worried
when you say that*

*From what you say,
it's been really
tough for you*

*I can see that you
are really frustrated
with everything
that's going on*

*It sounds like
you have felt
overwhelmed
at times*



TIP

Identify what you hear or see and name it, if that feels appropriate. (Note: describing or naming the emotion or behaviours may be an internal step rather than shared). **Validate** by acknowledging feelings.

Communication skills

- ☐ Summaries
- ☐ Make suggestions
- ☐ Non-verbal behaviours



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3. To support and take action

> Explore

What is your main concern?

What do you already know about..?

Can you tell me what is on your mind?



TIP

Explore to better understand the emotion, or to inquire whether the other person wants to share more. We may feel we do not have time to 'give'. However, it need only take a few moments to acknowledge and validate emotion. Those few words can build relationships, enhance trust, and allow greater comprehension and collaboration.

Communication skills

- ☐ Identify starting point & main concern
- ☐ Avoid jargon
- ☐ Chunk & check
- ☐ Invite questions
- ☐ Structure the discussion



Demonstrating empathy



The patient will never care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Terry Canale, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Vice Presidential Address (2000)

G.I.V.E. to connect, understand, and support



Get

that it's emotion



Identify

the emotion



Validate

by acknowledging feelings



Explore

to better understand the emotion

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