

Empathy

Empathy means we put ourselves in the shoes of the other person and imagine what they may be thinking and feeling. We want the other person to “feel felt.”

It is our ability to be present, rather than something we do.

We focus totally on the other person’s needs, remembering that this is not about us. It is about the other person’s needs. It is about connecting with another person, just as they are, without bringing any judgment, without agreement or disagreement.

Empathy can be verbal or nonverbal.

Empathy Does Not:

- Fix it “What will help is . . . ”
- Advise “I think you should . . . ”
- Interrogate “How did it happen?”
- Explain “She said that only because . . . ”
- Correct “That’s not how it was . . . ”
- Educate “You can learn from this.”
- Shut down “Don’t worry about it.”
- Console “It wasn’t your fault”
- Commiserate “He did that to you? The jerk!”
- One-up “You should hear what happened to . . . ”
- Tell tale “That reminds me of the time . . . ”
- Evaluate “If you hadn’t been so rude . . . ”
- Sympathize “You poor thing. I feel awful for you.”
- Take blame “Sorry, I should have . . . ”

Take time for empathy; do not rush to develop solutions.

Empathetic Listening

...the sentence frame can be very useful for keeping us focused on feelings and needs. This focus supports empathic connection.

Sentence Frames for Empathy Guesses

1. Are you feeling (insert feeling word here) because you're needing/wanting (insert need word here)?
2. I am wondering if you're feeling (insert feeling word here) because you're needing/wanting (insert need word here).
3. Sounds like you're feeling (insert feeling word here) because you are needing/wanting (insert need word here).
4. I am guessing you're feeling (insert feeling word here) because you're needing/wanting (insert need word here).
5. So, you're feeling (insert feeling word here) because you're needing/wanting (insert need word here).
6. Is it that you're feeling (insert feeling word here) because you are needing/wanting (insert need word here)?

The sentences above are examples. With practice you will find the language that works for you.

Stay with the empathy until you feel a body relaxation or release in the other person, the person becomes quiet, or you no longer choose to stay in the empathetic place.