

HELPFUL TOOLS:

Reframing- capture what the person said in neutral language

Helpful phrases: “it sounds like you feel ____ when...” “Tell me more about that.”
“Help me understand what you’re sharing better.”

Defining issues- summarizing and clarification

Helpful tools: Reflecting and prioritizing

Helpful phrases: “I heard you share some reasons you aren’t able to pursue the goal you originally set out to accomplish, what do you see as the main obstacle?” “what is the most important issue for you to focus on right now?” “When did you notice things had changed?”

Defining short and long term goals

Helpful phrases: “Am I understanding you correctly as you feel you need to work on ____ first and maybe ____ later on?” “On a scale of 1-10 how prepared to accomplish ____ and ____ are you?”

Generating and considering options

Helpful tools: Be specific

Helpful phrases: “What are some ideas you have currently?” “What would happen if...” “What will it look like when...”

Listening Rule for Understanding

I hear you saying you feel _____ when _____.
_____. Changes that would make things better for you are _____ because _____.

Crystal ball approach

What do you want in the future? (try to get the visitor to look beyond the current situation)

How well are you handling this conflict?

Tips for active listening

- Refrain from making assumptions about other’s motive
- Listen with respect and work hard to understand other’s interest
- Try not to interrupt the visitor while they are venting

Black Mouton Model (two or more parties)

- Develop a vision of the ideal situation
- Clarify the current situation
- Resolve issues that are preventing the achievement of the ideal

Abbreviated Position Statements

- When you say... (my interpretation of your overt message)
- And I see... (my interpretation of your covert message)
- Then I think...(my interpretation of your motive and/or some underlying cause of your reactions)
- And I react...(with certain feelings, thoughts, beliefs and behaviors)

Interpreting the Covert Message

- When I think what you are telling me is...
- It sounds like you are saying....
- How I interpret what you're telling me is...
- I assume from what you are saying what you mean...
- It seems to me you are saying..

Another way to help visitors explore their behaviors by having them draw two columns

- What I was thinking of feeling and didn't say
- What was actually said
- Exploring questions:
 - a. What kinds of things did you not say? Why?
 - b. What was the heart of the conversation that was never spoken?
 - c. How did your unspoken thoughts come out in the conversation?

The Power of "I wonder how..."

- Clarify what the visitor wants to achieve.
- Clarify what the visitor wants to avoid.
- Combine the two into an "and question by asking, "I wonder how you can achieve_____ and avoid_____."

Here are a few good clarifying questions and example of paraphrasing that work well for you:

- "Am I understanding you correctly?"
- "What did you mean by...?"
- "Can you give me an example of..."
- "Help me to understand..."
- "How can I assist with..."
- "Is there more you'd like to share...?"
- "How does this sound, when I reach out to "x," I will share "x"?"

Paraphrasing

- A- My grades are slipping, my health is bad, my car broke down and I just feel like dropping out of school!

- B-It sounds like you are feeling overwhelmed and you are thinking you may want to postpone school for a while. Is that right?

Perception Checking

If you tried to communicate clearly and you still find yourself in the midst of a sticky conversation with someone or a visitor, consider using the following formula for perception checking to help uncover the underlying interest or views of the other person. This is a great tip to offer visitors also if they seek guidance to have a difficult conversation. This is part of CRETE curriculum developed by Tricia Jones:

1. **Description** – describe observed behavior, free of judgement or blame
2. **Interpretation** – offer two possible interpretations, at least one (preferably both) must be good or objective
3. **Clarification** – request clarification from the person, for greater understanding

Example: “(1) When you left the office and slammed the door, (2) was it because you were upset with me or where you in a hurry.? (3) can you please let me know what’s up?”

Think of a couple of conflicts that you’ve had, perhaps which are still unresolved, and practice this formula to address the other person. What could you say?

Description:

Interpretation:

Clarification:

Empathize, Pinpoint, Move Forward

The next steps in this conflict could be empathize, pinpoint and move forward.

1. **Empathize** – to validate and diffuse defensiveness
2. **Pinpoint**- be as specific as possible for clarity
3. **Move forward** – toward a win-win resolution

Example: “ (E) I read the syllabus and though I understood the grading policies, and yet (P) I am still unclear on how I earned this grade. (M) Can you please help me understand?”

This formula allows discussion rather than debate. Think back for a moment to a time when you felt hurt, angry, defensive, or triggered. Were you able to do your best listening in that state? Probably not. This is why the first step in this formula is to empathize. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It demonstrates that you are trying to understand their logic and views, which will hopefully encourage them to attempt to understand you or others.

The second step is to clearly identify the conflict concerns and the third step is to figure out how to work together around them. Give this formula a try with one of the conflicts from the perception checking activity.

Empathize:

Pinpoint:

Move Forward:

“I” Messages

Just as important as what we say, is how we say it. When pinpointing concerns with the last formula, for example, I could say, “My roommate is a filthy pig, because he leaves his dirty laundry all over the floor.” That very specifically identifies my concerns, but probably won’t get me the pleasant result I am going for. As mentioned in the tools section, “I” messages are a formula for Nonviolent Communications developed by Marshal Rosenberg and found on the Center for

Nonviolent Communications website. Each statement is formulated to be self-reflective, rather than place the problem and the blame on the other person, hence the “I” in “I” Messages:

1. **Observation** – free from evaluation, judgement or blame
2. **Feelings** – more powerful than thoughts
3. **Needs / Values** – rather than specific preferences
4. **Request** – be open to their solutions as well, no likes to be told what to do

Examples: “(1) When I see laundry all over the floor (2) it really makes me irritated and upset, (3) because I need a clear, organized space to be able to concentrate when I study. (4) Can we please decide on a place to keep our dirty laundry? Maybe we can choose a day to be laundry day and go to the laundromat together. What do you think? Do you have any ideas about how to handle this?”

Give this formula a try with a conflict of your choosing:

Observation:

Feeling:

Need:

Request:

Here are other methods that use the “I” Message

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