



A Better Way to a Better Life

GUIDELINES FOR SHARING AND LISTENING

Skills for sharing emotions:

- State your views as **your own feelings** and thoughts, **not as absolute truths**.
- When expressing negative emotions or concerns, also include any positive feelings you have about the person or situation.
- Make your statement as specific as possible, both in terms of specific emotions and thoughts.
- Speak in "paragraphs". That is, express one main idea with some elaboration and then allow the other person to respond. Speaking for a long time without a break makes it hard for someone to listen.
- Express your feelings and thoughts with tact and timing so that the person can listen to what you are saying without becoming defensive.

Skills for listening:

Ways to respond while the other person is speaking:

- Show that you understand the person's statements and accept his or her right to how those thoughts and feelings. Demonstrate this acceptance through your tone of voice, facial expressions, and posture.
- Try to put yourself in the other person's place and look at the situation from his or her perspective in order to determine how the other person feels and thinks about the issue.

Skills for Responding:

Ways to respond after the other person finishes speaking:

- After the person finishes speaking summarize and restate their most important feelings, desires, conflicts, and thoughts.
- While in the listener role, do not:
 - a. Ask questions, except for clarification.
 - b. Express your own viewpoint or opinion.
 - c. Interpret or change the meaning of person's statements.
 - d. Offer solutions or attempt to solve a problem if one exists.
 - e. Make judgments or evaluate what the person has said.

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