

# Validation Statements

The current problem/need for validation is not what happened; it is what the individual feels about it.

So, the problem that must be addressed is an individual's feelings, not the situation.

To address their feelings, you must do so using emotional language, not rational or judgmental language.

If you want a validating statement to feel "true", make it about the truth of the situation for the other person. That truth is the way they feel about the event.

## EXAMPLES OF VALIDATING STATEMENTS

- 'I can see that you are very (upset, sad, frightened, scared)'
- 'Here's what I'm hearing you say (summarize with fact checking).'
- 'I guess that must have been hard for you.'
- 'I can see you are making an effort.'
- 'I can see how hard you are working.'
- 'Wow, (she/he) must have made you feel really angry/sad, etc..'
- 'I can see this is important to you.'
- 'What a frustrating situation to be in!'
- 'It must make you feel horrible to have someone do that.'
- 'That's got to be so (difficult , upsetting, frustrating, etc.) for you.'
- 'Wow, how hard that must be.'
- 'That really stinks!'
- 'That's messed up! (or stronger language if you are so inclined)'
- 'How frustrating!'
- 'Yeah, I can see how that might make you feel really sad.'
- 'It makes sense you would be so upset about that.'
- 'What a horrible feeling that must be.'
- 'What a tough spot...'
- 'It sounds like you feel that's really unfair and you shouldn't be asked to do that.'
- 'That must be really discouraging.'
- 'I bet you feel disappointed.'
- 'I know how much that meant to you.'
- 'Tell me more about... (shows interest)'
- 'I would be (upset, nervous, sad, scared, frightened, scared) too!!'
- 'I can see you're overwhelmed. Let me help you with that. Can we talk?'
- 'I know you're scared. It's going to be hard...and I know you will figure it out.'
- 'That must have been very upsetting for you.'
- 'I guess that must have been hard for you.'

- 'I'm thinking this must have been (upsetting, sad, frightening, scary) for you.'
- 'I'm thinking you must have been (upset, sad, frightened, scared, etc.)'
- 'I would have been (upset, sad, frightened, scared, etc.) too. (Self-disclosure)'
- 'Of course...me, too! I would have felt the same way. (Self-disclosure)'
- 'I don't have the same beliefs as you but I can see this is important to you.'
- 'We are both feeling sad...we are suffering together.'
- 'Your suffering is my suffering (because I care).'

***With validation, we may also want to know more and we can do this by using probing questions***

### **EXAMPLES OF PROBING / CURIOUS QUESTIONS**

- Can I ask some questions?
- Is this a good time to talk?
- Can we talk?
- Tell me more.
- What are you feeling?
- I don't understand.
- Help me to understand.
- What exactly happened? (Ask fact checking questions...)
- What am I not understanding?
- Are you mad at...upset with...me?
- What are you feeling?
- I'm thinking I might have a feeling of what you're going through.
- Would you like my opinion or do you just want me to listen?
- How can I help you out of this pain?
- Is there anything I can do to help you?
- Can you give me a stress #? 1 = I'm OK, 10 = I'm drowning!!
- Do you feel safe?
- I will worry if you...(don't keep in contact, don't call when you leave the house, go there alone..)
- I'm worried where this will go.
- Let me help you...
- Can I help you with that?
- Do you want to know what I think?