



WHAT TO EXPECT

- + Different levels of experience
- + Different places in faith experiences
- + Situations that require leader intervention

WHAT NOT TO DO

- + Correct or discount
- + Reason
- + Raise your voice or hand
- + Silent treatment
- + Fear and ultimatum language

WHAT TO DO

Active Listening & Response

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION TOOL

VALIDATE through active listening

- + Listen to what the person is saying
- + Identify the emotion
- + Avoid expressing your own opinion
- + Look past the issue to their feelings
- + Validate their emotions by repeating them back

Example:

Emotions: sad, angry, discouraged
"I can see how that situation would make you feel very upset."

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION TOOL

AFFIRM through strength-building

- + Find personal strengths about individual's character behind what they're saying
- + Providing this encouragement will help reframe their situation & identify strength qualities
- + Will help move their mindset and emotional energy in a healthy direction

Example:

Emotions: endurance, strength, desire to rely on God
"I am amazed by how you have endured and trusted God through this challenge. It says so much about your strength."

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION TOOL

RECONNECT through togetherness

- + Affirm the relationship
- + Ask for simple forgiveness (when applicable)
- + Graciously communicate what you need as you walk through different seasons of life together
- + Reaffirm security that this is a process and you are in it together - don't need to have a solution to every conflict, problem or heavy situation discussed

Example:

"I know we don't have all of the answers right now and that this is going to be a process for us. We can walk through this together, discovering greater patience and answers along the way."

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

USE "AND" INSTEAD OF "BUT"

"I can see that you are having a really challenging time, BUT you continue to show strength and courage by seeking help..."

vs.

"I can see that you are having a really challenging time, AND you continue to show strength and courage by seeking help..."

USE SCRIPTURE CAREFULLY

- + Keep Scripture references simple & short
- + Point to rest, grace and hope vs. expectations, work or performance

SAMPLE SITUATION

"I have bipolar disorder and struggle with a lot of anxiety. I was having a panic attack at church and had one of the pastors pray for me. It was intense spiritual warfare against the demonic forces! After he finished praying, all my anxiety and panic was gone! I know that my condition is all a spiritual issue."

UNHEALTHY RESPONSE

"Thanks for sharing but I personally don't think you should say that it's all a spiritual issue. I would wait a few weeks and really reassess your opinion of the experience. Even though you experienced anxiety and panic disappearing, I think there are a lot more things that really go into fixing your anxiety and panic."

HEALTHY RESPONSE

*"I am so sorry. That sounds like it was very intense and a scary experience for you (**VALIDATE**). I want you to know that it shows so much courage and strength for you to seek out help from the church and from the leaders (**AFFIRM**). And you know what's great? Prayer is one of the many tools that we have to help us during the challenging times that we face! We are in this journey together and let's see what other great tools the curriculum has to offer us today (**RECONNECT**)."*

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AFFIRM
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RECONNECT
through togetherness
