

ABOUT INVALIDATING STATEMENTS...

****Remember, the current problem is not what happened; it is what your relative feels about it. So, the problem that must be addressed is her/his feelings, not the situation. To address her 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.

When you make a validating statement you **SHOULD NOT**:

- Make it about you. “I hated it when that happened to me.”
- Try to one-up the person. “Oh, you think you have it bad...”
- Tell them how they should feel. “You should feel lucky, blessed...” “What’s the big deal?”
- Try to give them advice. “What you really should do is...”
- Try to solve their problem. “I’m going to call that girl’s parents and...”
- Cheerlead (there is a time for this, but not now). “I know you can do it...”
- Make “life” statements. “Well, life’s not fair...”
- Make judgmental statements. “What you did was **wrong/bad/stupid...good/great...**”
- Make “revisionist” statements. “If you had only...”
- Make it about your feelings. “How do you think that makes **me** feel?”
- Make “character” statements. “You’re too sensitive.” “You’re so dramatic.”
- Rationalize another person’s behavior. “I bet they were just...”
- Call **names**. “You’re such a **baby**.” “Don’t be such a **wimp**.”
- Use reason or the “facts.” “That’s not what happened...”
- Use “always” or “never” statements. “You always get yourself into these situations...”
- Compare the person to someone else. “Why can’t you be like your sister?”
- **Label** the person. “You’re **nuts...crazy**”, etc.
- Advising to cut ties or ignore the situation. “Just ignore him.”

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, that (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.
Darn, I know how much that meant to you.
Tell me more. (*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 love you).
Fair enough.
You may be right!
WOW!!!

PHYSICAL TOUCH

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 getting?

Are you mad at...upset with...me?

What are you feeling?

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!!

Are you 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.

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?

Let me help you...

Can I help you with that?

Do you want to know what I think?

Does this make sense?

I need time to think about it...this. (*Buy more time*)

I need to talk to (mom, dad, etc.) about this. (*Buy more time*)

I / we will get back to you. (*Buy more time*)