



HEALING MODEL OF COMPASSION

LISTEN: WITH CLOSED MOUTH OVER AND OVER

Don't assume you know better or place expectations

EMPATHIZE: PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

Don't reject or criticize personal choice

IDENTIFY: FIND YOUR PARALLEL EXPERIENCE WITHOUT SHIFTING THE FOCUS

Don't deny voice or personhood

ACCEPT: BELIEVE THE EXPERIENCE TO BE TRUE

Don't instruct or interrogate

VALIDATE: MIRROR BACK WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND

Don't undermine or oppose

ENCOURAGE: OFFER SUPPORT ON THEIR PATH

Don't shun, place conditions or ask others to join in Double Abuse™

Listening means that instead of retreating, tell your loved one that you are there to listen only. Then, listen, listen, listen. No judgments, no suggestions, no interpretations. Often when a victim/survivor is listened to, they may begin to hear (for themselves) and become more open to a later offer of intervention. Remember that the victim's position did not occur overnight: they may feel it's become the norm, or be so terrified that any thought of action is overwhelming. They are vulnerable and must be approached with empathy and compassion, not pity. Listen with big ears and a closed mouth. Do not even blame the Alleged Perpetrator or try to hold them accountable to the victim. They may rise to their Perpetrator's defense.

Once that first step of listening opens even a slit in the door, you can move to the other five steps:

Accepting means to believe that what the victim/survivor says is true of their experience. This does not mean approval or blind acceptance of what they may or may not have done. It means that you accept that they are in a highly compromised position without knowing what to do, and they need you to accept their veracity, pain, fear, indecision, confusion for what it is: the story of their suffering.

Empathizing is the act of being able to put yourself in the other's shoes, enough that you can feel what they are experiencing. Being able to feel empathy in current time with the victim/survivor's situation will guide you in communicating your deep understanding, without negative judgment, evaluating, or telling them what to do. Empathizing will also guide you in offering them compassion and patience as they process and make their own decision. Lastly, empathy offers an emotional companionship along their journey to health and well-being.

Validating consists of mirroring back to your loved ones what you are understanding about what they are saying, not in a parroting way, but so that they can hear that you truly do comprehend not only the content of what they are saying but the meaning their experience has for them.

Identifying is the act of assisting the abused to *name their experience*: this interaction helps them find their voice and their words to narrate what has been confusing. Identifying the abuse supports them in speaking their truth to those who can intervene and help them heal. Sometimes, it can be illuminating for you to name your own parallel experiences as examples, as long as when you use these examples the primary focus remains on developing their narrative instead of shifting to yours.

Encouraging is not a set of directives but your communication that you believe in them, that you will walk beside them, and know that with the right support they will have the courage to work their way out of the morass.