Talk it Up:
Building Connections with Clients and Colleagues

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Objective:
Name at least three active listening principles that can improve communications with clients and colleagues.

Building a Bridge
When dealing with tough situations, our role as educators and counselors is to build, not burn, a bridge. Taking the time to read between the lines and listen more deeply can build understanding. Affirmation is the key! The power of connection will help in building the bridge.

Building Listening Skills
- Counseling is not the same as talking. Counseling is more about listening!
- Listening involves:
  - Observing body language and tone of voice
  - Tuning in to the whole person
  - Reading between the lines
  - Being curious!
- Habits that interfere:
  - Fake listening
  - Multi-tasking/Preoccupation
  - Boredom
  - Over-educating
  - “Fixing” people
- Improving listening skills (Schilling 2012)
  - Face the other person/maintain eye contact
  - Pay attention
  - Keep an open mind
  - Try to “picture” what the person is saying
  - Try to “feel” what the person might be feeling
  - Avoid jumping in with solutions
  - Be curious!
The Power of Human Emotions

- Human beings are guided by emotions
- “People are feeling machines that think, not thinking machines that feel.”
- Women are especially talented in reading faces, perhaps due to increased “mirroring” neurons that enhance sensitivity to emotional stimuli. (Cheng 2009)
- Women in the early postpartum period are especially susceptible to emotion-based messaging.
- Universal motivators
  - Acceptance
  - Curiosity
  - Family
  - Honor/Need to Belong
  - Idealism/Independence
  - Order
- Emotion-based motivators for new mothers (Touching Hearts Touching Minds)
  - Desire to be a good mother
  - A strong family
  - Love and happiness from children
  - Sense of success

Tools that Build Connection

- Body language accounts for 55% of messages given. Tone of voice accounts for 38%. Words account for 7%. (DeVite 1989)
- Women rely on visual communication (body language, eye contact, etc.) to determine acceptance. (Brizendine 2006)
- Step ONE: Be curious! Listen and learn.
  - Seek to understand
  - Open-ended questions: what, how, tell me
- Step TWO: Build rapport. Affirm her feelings.
  - Agree
  - Read between the lines
  - Show the person they are not alone
  - Acknowledge successes
  - Appeal to strongest universal motivator
- Step THREE: Give options.
  - Meet the person where they are
  - Find palatable solutions that meet mutual goals.

The Power of WE!
**Bibliography**


