

## 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!**



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