

## Validation

### A "How To" Guide to Verbal and Nonverbal Validation

*How can we validate others?*

1. Actively listen. Make eye contact and stay focused.
2. Be mindful of both nonverbal and verbal reactions in order to avoid invalidation (e.g., rolling eyes; sucking teeth; walking away; saying, "That's stupid, don't be sad", or "I don't care what you say").
3. Observe what the other person is feeling in the moment. Look for a word that describes the feeling.
4. Reflect the feeling back without judgment. The goal is to communicate that you understand how the other person feels (e.g., "It makes sense that you're angry," "I understand that you are having a tough time right now") (for self, "I have a right to feel sad").
5. Show tolerance! Look for how the feelings, thoughts, and actions make sense, given the other person's (or your) history and current situation, even if you don't approve of the behaviors, emotions, or actions themselves.
6. Respond in a way that shows you are taking the other person seriously (with or without words). If someone is crying, give a tissue or a hug. If someone is presenting a problem, start problem solving immediately (unless the person wishes merely to be heard).

*How can we validate ourselves?*

Use Steps 3, 4, and 5.

Examples of validation of others \_\_\_\_\_  
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Examples of self-validation \_\_\_\_\_  
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