

Transforming Lives.  
Building Community Well-Being.



# BEHAVIORAL CHANGE STAIRWAY MODEL (BCSM)

## Basic Verbal De-escalation Skills



# Objectives

- 🌱 Describe the Behavioral Change Stairway Model
- 🌱 Discuss the difference between hearing and listening
- 🌱 Discuss why empathy is better than sympathy in crisis intervention
- 🌱 Identify why building rapport is important

# SAFETY FIRST

- ① Always assess a situation for hazards to safety
- ② Never sacrifice your safety or the safety of others

# THE B.C.S.M.

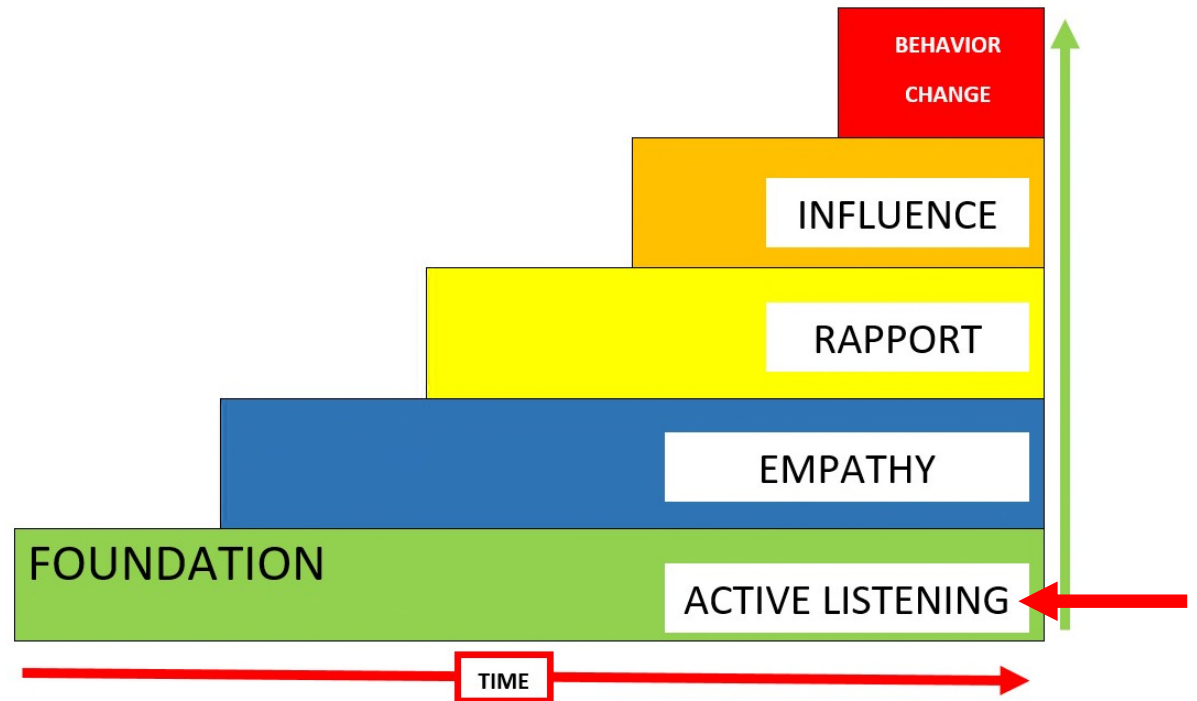
- ✿ The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Behavioral Change Stairway Model (BCSM) is a staple of the high-stakes world of crisis negotiation. The model's applicability, however, is not limited to just hostage negotiations and suicide interventions. It is one of my favorite negotiation frameworks because of its diverse suitability to a variety of conflict settings, and it can be a highly useful model for negotiators working in business and organizational settings.

Gregory M. Vecchia, Vincent B. Van Hasseltb, and Stephen J. Romanoc, "Crisis (hostage) negotiation: current strategies and issues in high-risk conflict resolution," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 10 (2005)



# BEHAVIORAL CHANGE STAIRWAY MODEL

What type  
of behavior  
are we  
trying to  
change?



# LISTENING vs. HEARING

✿ Hearing is the process of your ears picking up sound waves and transmitting their message to the brain.



✿ Listening involves not only hearing the message but, having a genuine desire to understand and evaluate the message being sent and to respond based on that understanding.

# LISTENING

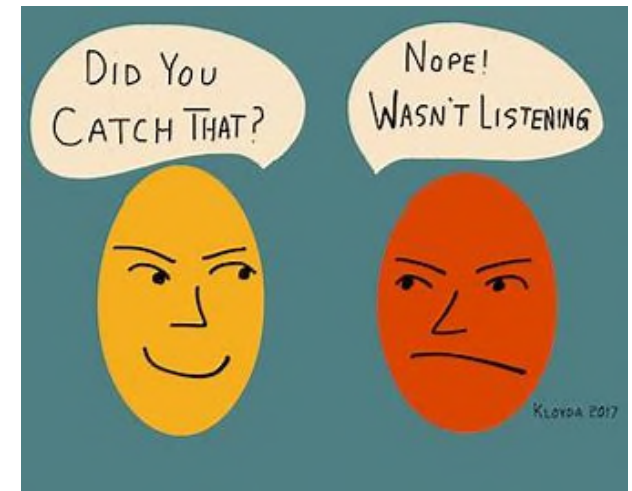
Listening is an active process that has three basic steps.

1. **Hearing:** means listening enough to catch what the speaker is saying.
2. **Understanding:** happens when you take what you have heard and understand it in your own way so that you can use it to help.
3. **Judging (for correctness/logic):** after you are sure you understand what the speaker has said, think about whether it makes sense.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE NOT JUDGING THE PERSON OR THE CIRCUMSTANCE, BUT WHAT THEY ARE COMMUNICATING TO US ABOUT THEMSELVES OR THE SITUATION.**

# ACTIVE LISTENING

- 🌱 **Active Listening** is the foundation for effective communication and is not just what you hear, but also what you see and feel.
- 🌱 Helps lead to a safe outcome
- 🌱 It's a skill that can be developed
- 🌱 It takes time and patience
- 🌱 It requires focus on verbal & nonverbal messages
- 🌱 Is nonjudgmental



# ACTIVE LISTENING IS NOT

- ❖ Advice, Judgment or Persuasion
- ❖ Discussion of topics not expressed by the person in crisis

*The person's feelings, values, statements  
and opinions are what count*

# ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

- 🌱 Attentive
- 🌱 Restatement
- 🌱 Reflection
- 🌱 Open-ended questions
- 🌱 Minimal Encouragers
- 🌱 Effective Pauses
- 🌱 Silence



# BEING ATTENTIVE

## ❖ **Focusing your attention completely on the person in crisis**

- **Words used by person in crisis**
- **Rate of speech**
- **Tone of voice**
- **Facial expression**
- **Body language**

## ❖ **Also, attend to the above in yourself**

## ❖ **Don't just show up physically...show up with mind, heart and gut (our 6<sup>th</sup> sense)**





# RESTATEMENT

- 🌱 SUMMARIZING what you have heard and/or otherwise observed.

PERIODICALLY COVERING THE MAIN POINTS

YOUR WORDS = HIS/HER STORY + HIS/HER FEELINGS

“Ok, what you have told me so far is this.....and as a result, you feel.....” Do I understand you correctly?

# REFLECTION

🌱 Feeding back the person's FEELINGS about the crisis.

🌱 IN YOUR OWN WORDS

🌱 NOT MIMICKING (you are not a parrot)

🌱 IT DOES NOT JUDGE OR GIVE ADVICE...

**IT REFLECTS!!**

A WAY OF  
**CHECKING**  
RATHER THAN  
**ASSUMING**  
THAT YOU  
UNDERSTAND  
WHAT IS  
BEING SAID

# SUMMARIZING or PARAPHRASING

- 🌱 This is a strategy in which you sort through the information presented in order to pull out and paraphrase the essential ideas.
- 🌱 It requires you to determine what is important, to condense this information, and to state it in your own words



# OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS



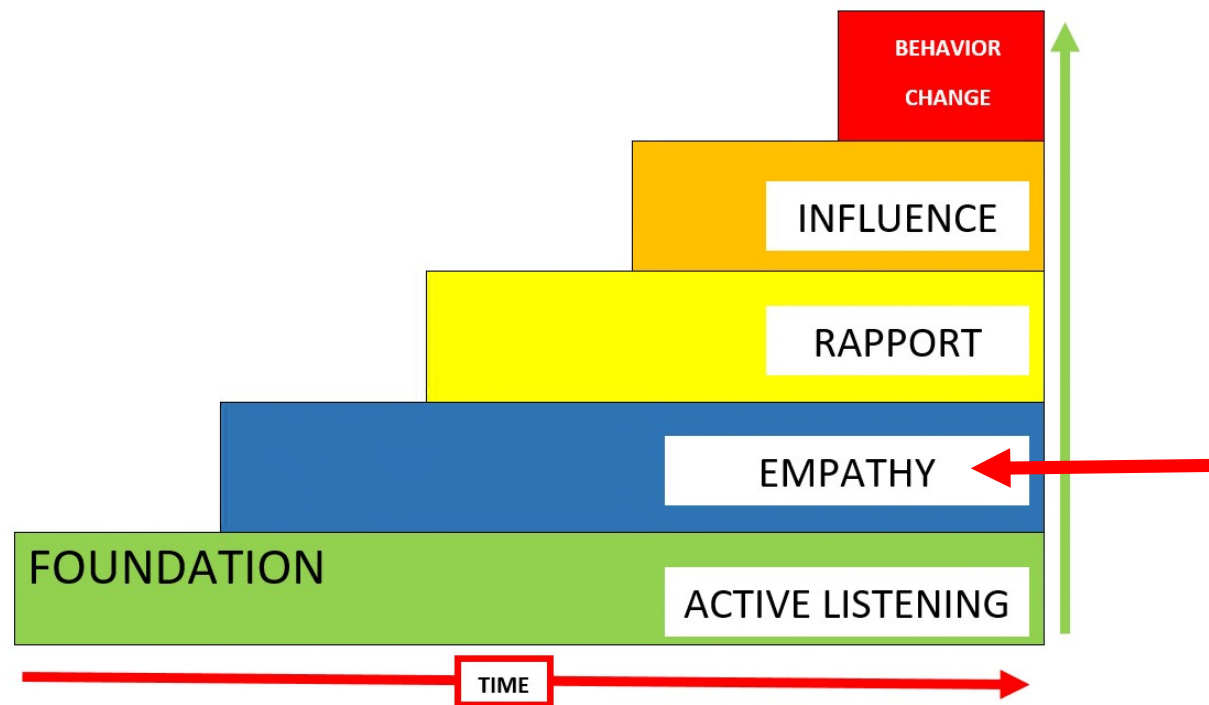
# MINIMAL ENCOURAGERS

- BRIEF RESPONSES (SOUNDS) THAT INDICATE YOUR PRESENCE AND THAT YOU ARE LISTENING
  - “Uh-huh...really?...yeah...OK, etc.”
  - Best used when the person is talking through an extended thought or for an extended period of time.
  - People want to know that you are there & listening.

# EFFECTIVE PAUSES (SILENCE)

- 🌱 Immediately before or after saying something meaningful.
- 🌱 Help focus thought and interaction.
- 🌱 Help show the subject that conversation is a “turn taking process”
- 🌱 Can also be an appropriate response to anger (wait until the subject asks if you are still there).
  - To calm their anger or to restrain yours

# BEHAVIORAL CHANGE STAIRWAY MODEL





# EMPATHY

The ability or practice of imagining or trying to deeply understand what someone else is feeling or what it's like to be in their situation.

# EMPATHY IS NOT

## Sympathy

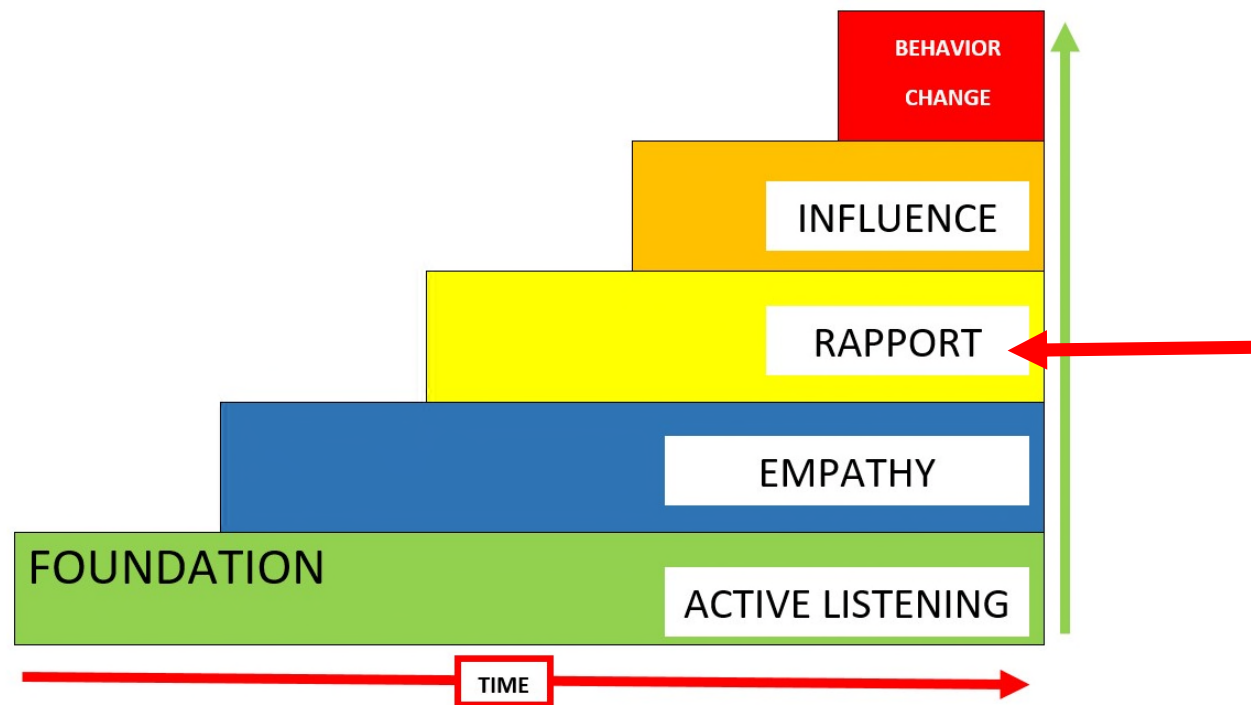
- “...an expression of pity or sorrow for the distress of another...”
- Pity and sorrow are not productive

 It's not necessary to have the emotion of the person you are trying to help, but to be familiar with the emotion.

# An Empathy Statement

- 🌱 You must convey to the person that you recognize and accept their feelings and the reasons for those feelings.
  - **DO NOT CONVEY JUDGMENT BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT REACTION TO THE SAME SITUATION**
  
- 🌱 When you recognize the emotion that is being displayed, you have to:
  1. **Provide clear/precise description of the emotion**
  2. **State what you believe is the cause of the emotion**

# BEHAVIORAL CHANGE STAIRWAY MODEL



# RAPPORT

🌱 Building rapport is the key to a successful relationship.

- People in a relationship tend to communicate.
- Communication is vital to helping someone

🌱 What is it?

- ✓ trust between people
- ✓ “in tune” or “being on the same page”
- ✓ mutual understanding
- ✓ seeing each other as human beings

# MAINTAINING RAPPORT



## Communicate at their level

- Avoid technical terms and jargon
- Be prepared to explain and to repeat what you say



## Give factual information

- Correct any possible misconceptions
- Have some resource material available



## Use sincere reinforcement

- Thank them for information and compliance
- Smiles and affirmative head nods go a long way



## Be able to summarize the conversation

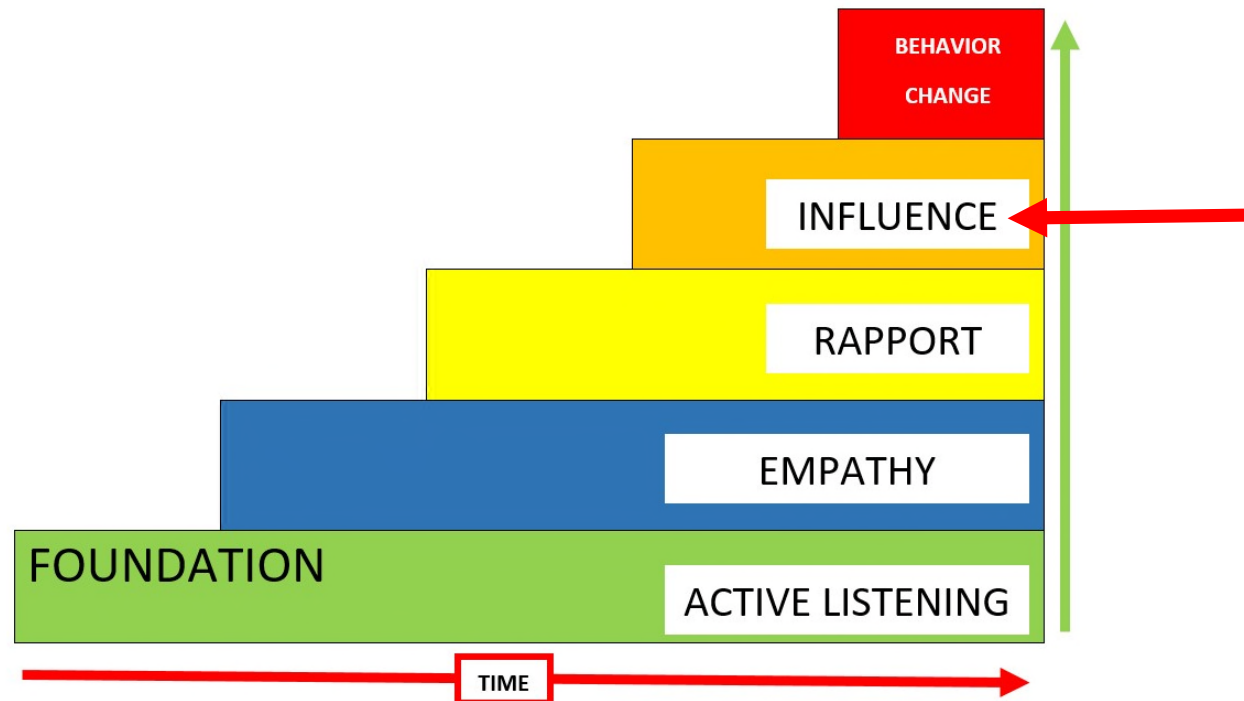
- Don't interrupt to do so
- Give them time to correct things you may have misunderstood
- Have them summarize the plans and options you create



## Avoid these phrases:

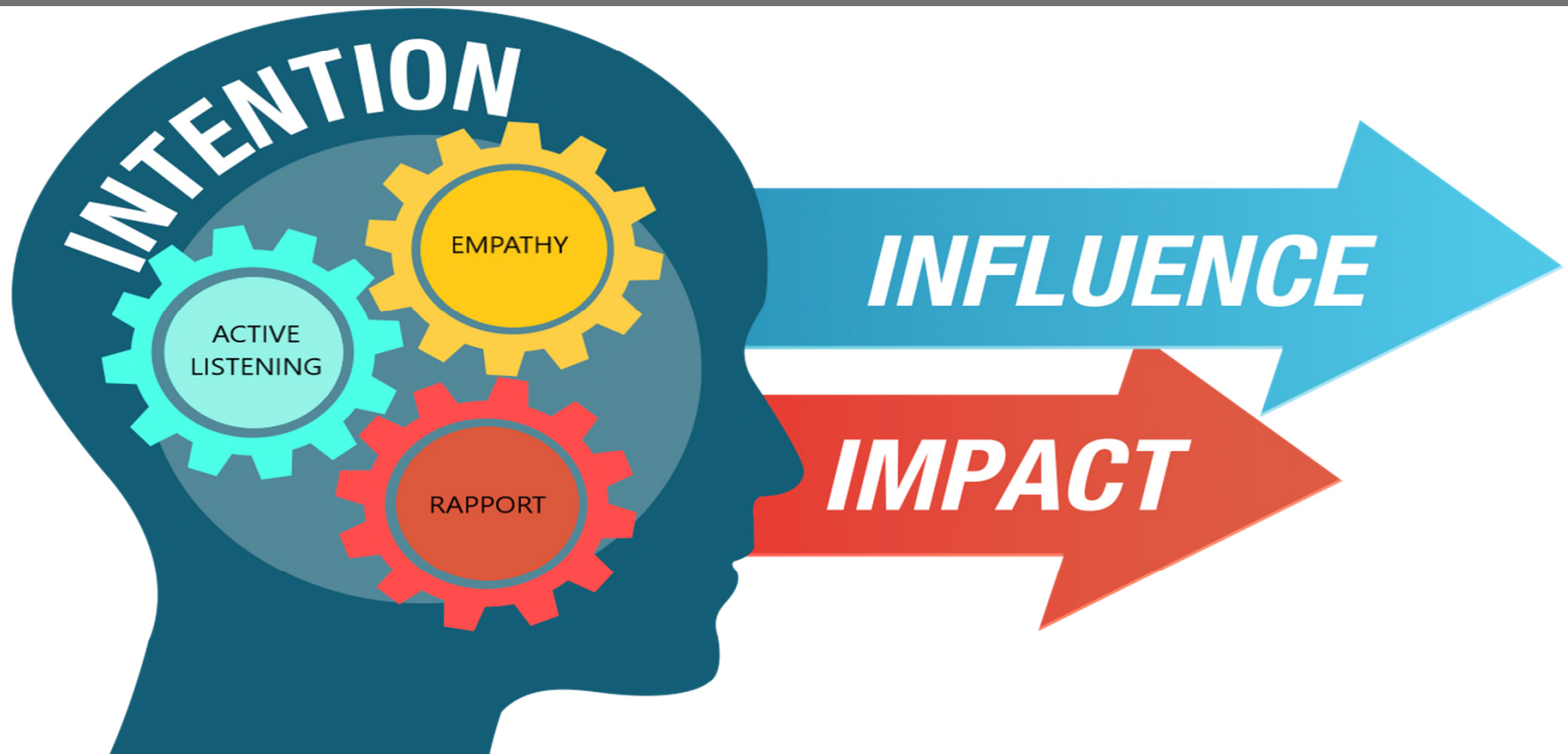
- "I understand..."
- "Calm down!" - "Relax!" - "Chill out!"
- "You should..." or "You shouldn't..."
- "Why" questions

# BEHAVIORAL CHANGE STAIRWAY MODEL





# INFLUENCE



# INFLUENCE IS NOT

**authority**

**superiority**

**coercion**

**force**

ANY  
QUESTIONS?





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# Thank You!!

Interested in more trainings like this? Contact us at: [trainingunit@trilliumnc.org](mailto:trainingunit@trilliumnc.org)

