

VALIDATION

A Powerful Skill for Responding

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DEFINITION

Validation is when we communicate to another person that their experience or feelings makes sense.

This powerful tool can benefit your teen in different ways

BENEFICIAL

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LOWERS THE INTENSITY OF TEEN'S EMOTIONS

1

2

INCREASES THEIR ABILITY TO MAKE SENSE OF THEIR EMOTIONS

HELPS THEM FEEL CONNECTED

3

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Validation

Powerful Outcomes

1

LISTEN WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS

Put away your phone. Stop multi-tasking. Listen closely and mindfully. If you don't have time, you can plan to talk later. Be sure that you follow through.

2

BE CURIOUS INSTEAD OF JUDGMENTAL

Teens' feelings can be complex. Instead of judging, be curious. "It seems like you're angry. Tell me about that." Listening mindfully can help you to see the situation through their eyes.

3

NORMALIZE YOUR TEEN'S FEELINGS

Let your teen know that what they're feeling makes sense which almost immediately lowers someone's emotional intensity. This can help them think more clearly.

4

LISTEN WITH RESPECT

You may not understand why they're emotional but listen respectfully. Ask your teen how you might be helpful rather than automatically cheering up, fixing, or giving advice.

Invalidating Responses

1

SAYING YOU UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU DON'T

It's fine to say, "help me understand what it is you're feeling."

If you have the urge to defend yourself or talk about yourself, *stop.*

Turning the attention to yourself can increase distress. Listen mindfully instead.

DEFENDING OR TURNING THE ATTENTION TO YOURSELF

2

3

TELLING SOMEONE HOW THEY SHOULD FEEL

Everyone has a right to their feelings. It is vitally important that teens experience and then trust their feelings without trying to escape their feelings.

Don't give advice. Ask your teen if they want you to listen or if they'd like your advice.

GIVING UNSOLICITED ADVICE

4

5

CHEERING UP

Instead of trying to cheer up your teen, stay calm and listen mindfully.

Your teen may be emotionally sensitive; it doesn't mean they're fragile. This can become someone's belief about themselves, and you don't want to contribute to that belief.

TREATING SOMEONE AS FRAGILE OR INCAPABLE

6

7

TELLING SOMEONE THEY SHOULD FEEL GRATEFUL

In addition to feeling stressed, worried, or angry, now they feel guilty too. Instead say, "it makes sense that you feel that way. What do you need?" or "What might be helpful?"

Laughing, criticizing, or judging what someone says is invalidating and will most likely add to their distress and interfere with your relationship.

JUDGING YOUR TEEN

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