

“The 6 Levels of Validation + Two” Worksheet

Level One. Am I Mindfully Listening?

Can I listen with empathy, “really paying attention,” putting the paper down, turning the TV off?

I am willing to...

Level Two. Accurate Reflecting and Acknowledging

Say back the essence or gist of what has been expressed. Describe what you observe. Refrain from interpretations, as these likely come from your perspective to make your point. Your acknowledging does NOT depend on agreement. This can allow you to express an accurate understanding of the other’s experience and of the other’s feelings without judgment.

State your nonjudgmental observation of what was said to you:

Level Three. Articulating the Unverbalized emotions, thoughts, or behavior

Focus questions on confirming what the other appears to be thinking, feeling, wanting.

Ask a clarifying question from your caring or genuine curiosity:

Level Four. Placing problem behavior in a larger context of the past learning and biological problems

Consider the impact of past learning and biological factors on how the problem behaviors developed. Balancing the problem behavior with these factors. Not ignoring or minimizing.

Describe how you understand the context of this problem:

Level Five. Normalizing and Attending to the present context

Of course...this (behavior) makes sense, is understandable...” Consider the present situation or the intended goal of this behavior.

This makes sense to me considering...

Level Six. Radical Genuineness: Expressing Equality and Respect

The other is not seen or related to as a fragile or incapable person. Allow his/her experience without attempting or forcing change.

I am remembering to demonstrate my respect by...

Plus One. Matching Vulnerability with our Loved Ones

We are self-disclosing to reassure, to validate, to increase safety. This is when we openly express some of our own painful, vulnerable, or sensitive experience that may parallel what our partner is coping with.

I also feel _____ at times...

Plus Two. Responding in Action

Offer assistance, act with kindness, offer a hug, reach out to take a hand.

May I...