

# Conscious Communication

*The foundations of effective and thoughtful communication*

# What we will cover...

- Active listening skills
- Building rapport
- Understanding the importance of empathy
- Empowerment through communication
- Your communication toolbox
- Best practices for effective communication

## **Consider:**

*What makes you want to share a story?*

## Warmth

when communicating  
our feeling or attitude:

55% tone, 38% body  
language, 7% words\*

*\*Dr. Albert Mehrabian's Rule of Personal  
Communication*

## Empathy

helps establish  
that we  
understand the  
expressed  
emotion and feel  
**WITH** the other  
person.

## Respect

we must always  
honor the  
experiences and  
choices of the other  
person.



Shorts

“Because the truth is, rarely can a response make something better. What makes something better is connection.”

- Brené Brown



# Your Toolbox

## QUESTIONS

- Person asking is in control
- Open (a lot of information)
- Closed (specific information)
- Who, what, when, where
- NEVER “why”

## MIRRORING

- Assuming similar posture/tone
- Builds connection
- Helps unconsciously relax an upset person



# Your Toolbox

## ACTIVE LISTENING

- Body language
- Focused attention (eye contact, repeating back)
- Get on their level (language matters)
- Invitations to continue (nods, gestures, audible encouragement)

## VALIDATING

- Normalizes
- Helps someone feel heard and seen for their experience

## REFLECTING

- Gets at emotions
- Diffuses the emotion (*“Name it to tame it”*)

# Active Listening/Validation Practice

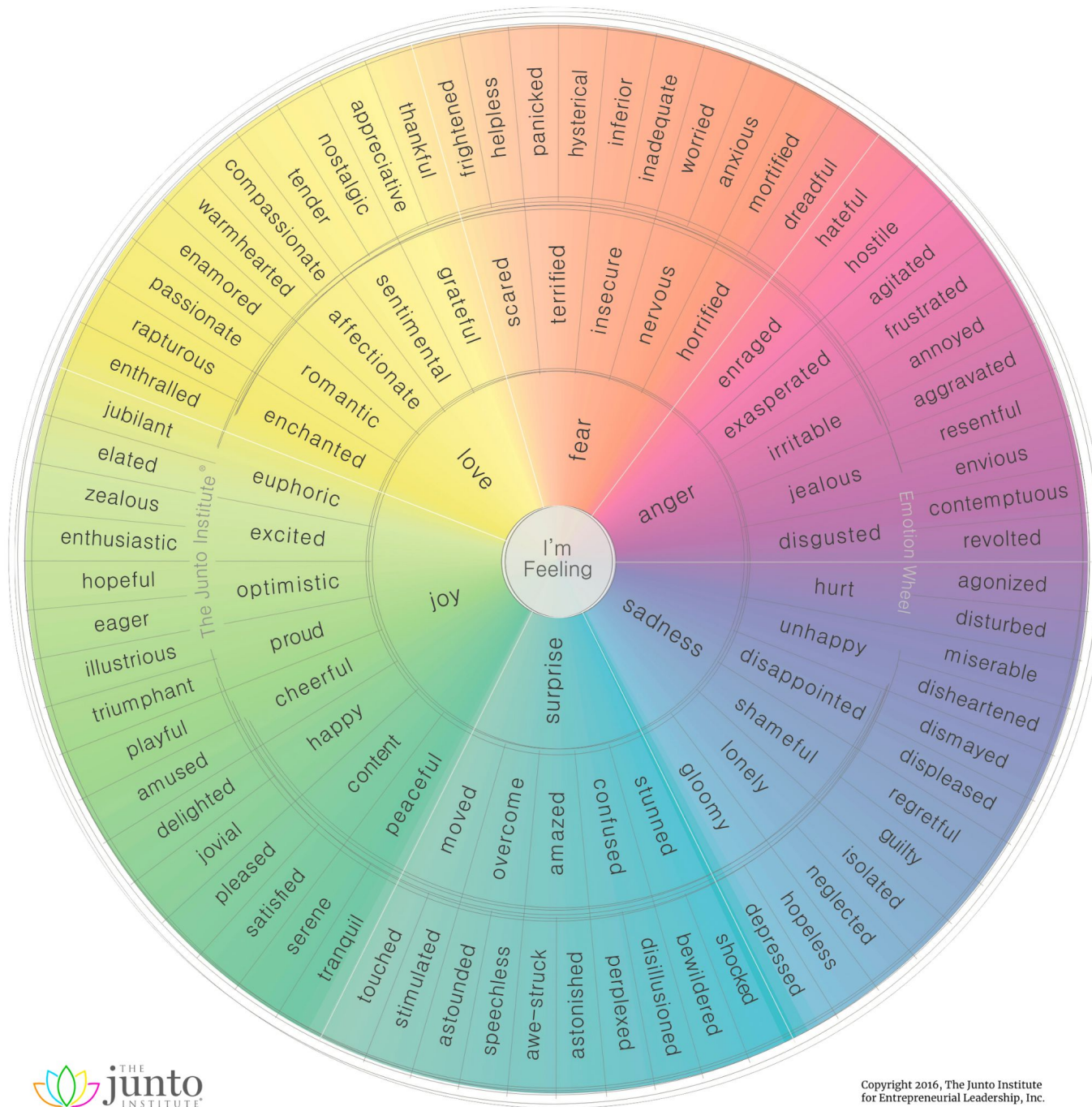
*“I feel him on me all the time. I feel sick and I don’t sleep anymore.”*



## Active Listening/Validation Practice

*“I feel him on me all the time. I feel sick and I don’t sleep anymore.”*

**You’ve gone through something that was really terrible. It is normal to feel this way. Your brain is just trying to process everything you have been through.**



# Reflection Practice



*“I don’t feel like myself. I feel like I’m going crazy. I’m numb, then I’m in tears. Half the time I don’t know what I’m really doing.”*

Name the emotions...

# Reflection Practice

*“I don’t feel like myself. I feel like I’m going crazy. I’m numb, then I’m in tears. Half the time I don’t know what I’m really doing.”*

overwhelmed // confused // stressed // sad //  
anxious // detached...

## Reflection Practice

*“I don’t feel like myself. I feel like I’m going crazy. I’m numb, then I’m in tears. Half the time I don’t know what I’m really doing.”*

**It is understandable that you would feel overwhelmed and confused after something like this.**

## Reflection Practice

*“I don’t feel like myself. I feel like I’m going crazy. I’m numb, then I’m in tears. Half the time I don’t know what I’m really doing.”*

**It is understandable that you would feel overwhelmed and confused after something like this. These are normal emotions to experience after trauma. Your brain is just trying to process it. [AND VALIDATE!]**



# Your Toolbox

## PARAPHRASING

- Clarifies
- Forces you to listen
- Lets them know you're listening
- Lets them hear what they said

### Paraphrasing Example 5

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<u>Original Text</u>	<u>Paraphrase</u>
Willy Wonka was famous for his delicious candy. Children and adults loved to eat it.	Willy Wonka was known throughout the world because people enjoyed eating the tasty candy he made.

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# Paraphrase Practice

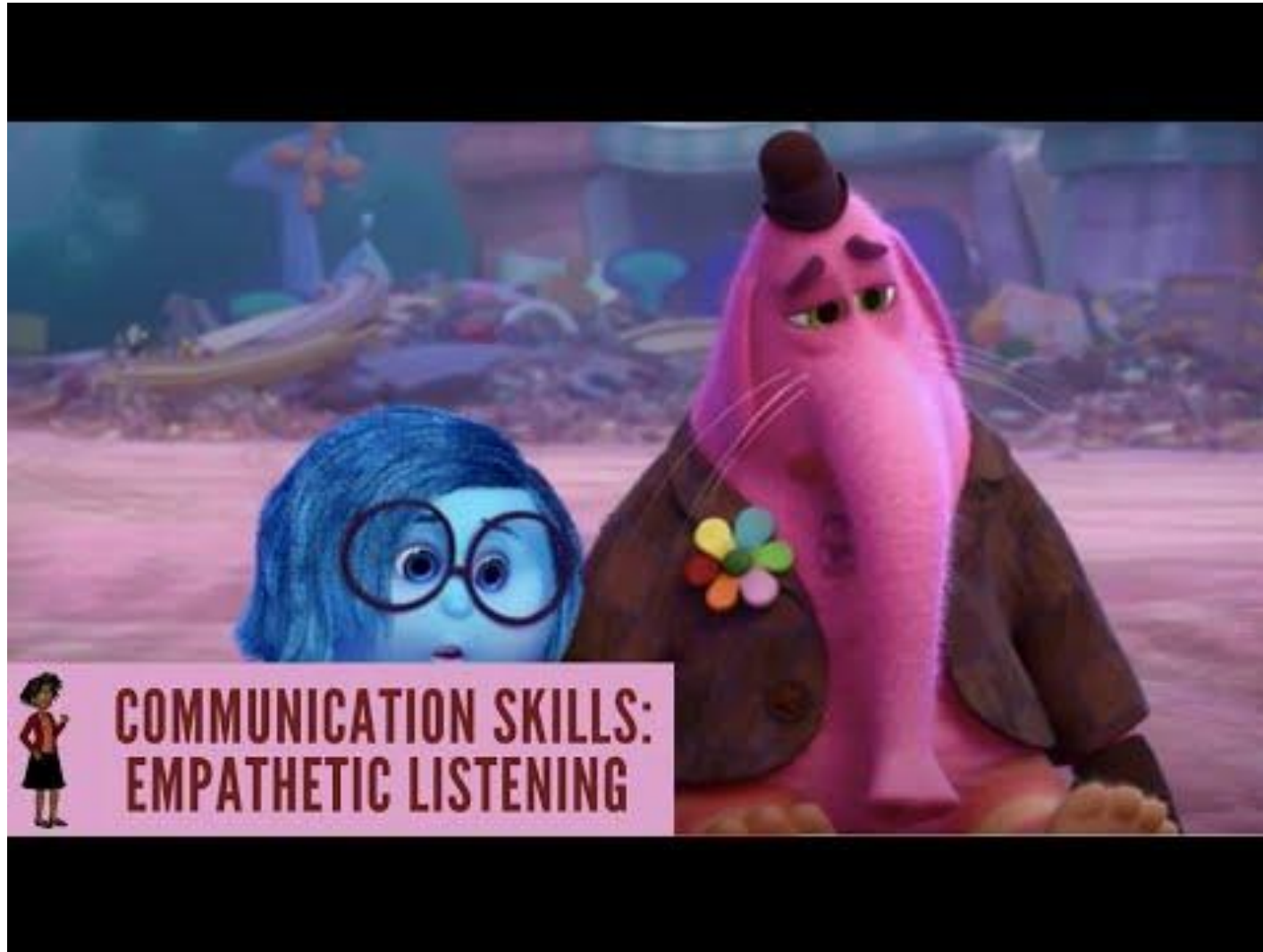
*“I don’t want to think about it. Every time I think about it, I breakdown and I have kids that need me and a job that I have to keep.”*

Repeat the information with different words...

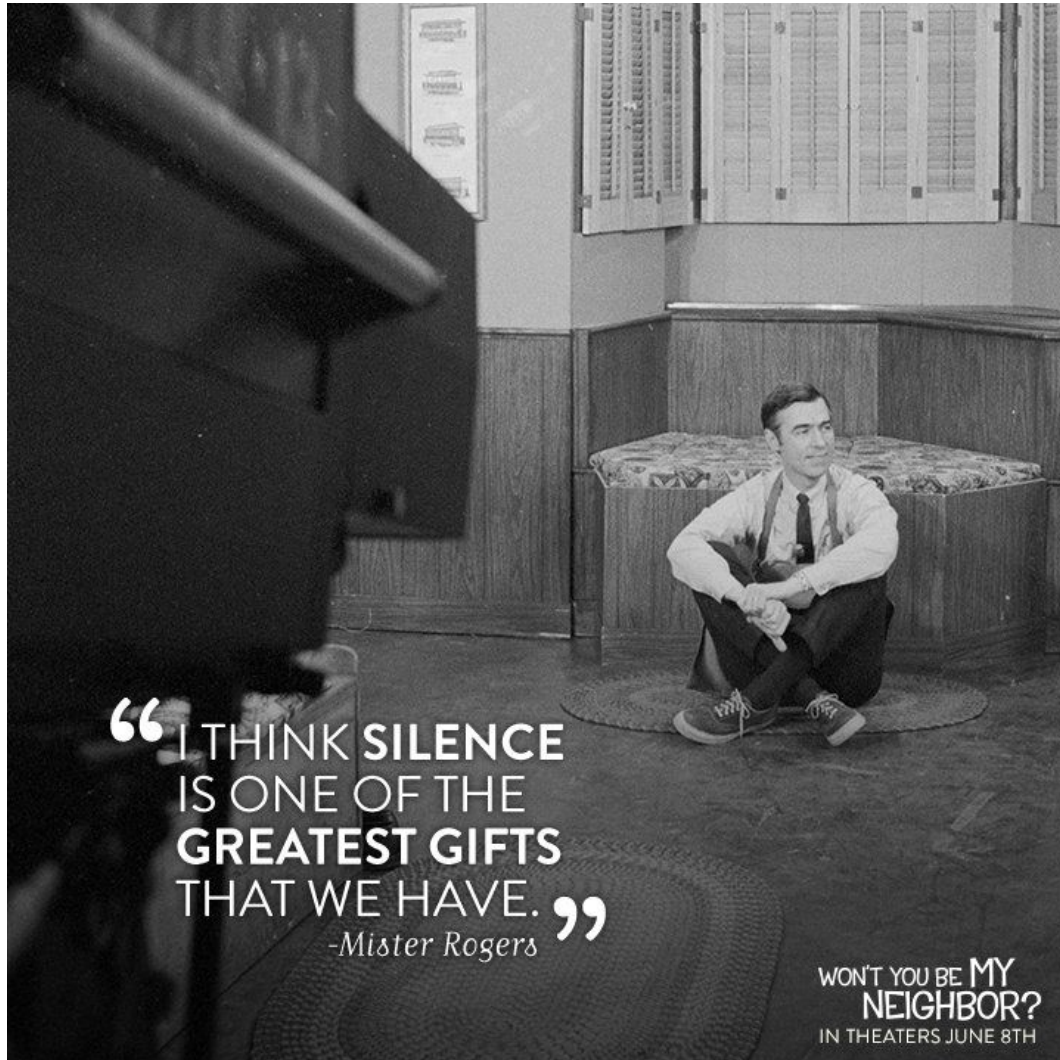
## Paraphrase Practice

*“I don’t want to think about it. Every time I think about it, I breakdown and I have kids that need me and a job that I have to keep.”*

**You’re handling so much right now. It feels too difficult to take in all at once.**



# Your Toolbox



***“I wonder what some people are afraid might happen in the silence. Some of us must have forgotten how nourishing silence can be. That kind of solitude goes by many names.”***

- Fred Rogers



# Your Toolbox

Questions

Mirroring

Active Listening

Validating

Reflecting

Paraphrasing

Silence

# Empowerment in Communication

**All victimization is about power and control.**

To have experienced a crime means that a victim/survivor at one point lost their sense of control and safety to the perpetrator.

**Safety**

**Options**

**Action**

# Empowerment = Rapport

**Safety**

physical, emotional  
& psychological  
(establish that basic  
needs are met)

**Options**

provide choices

**Action**

reinstates  
control



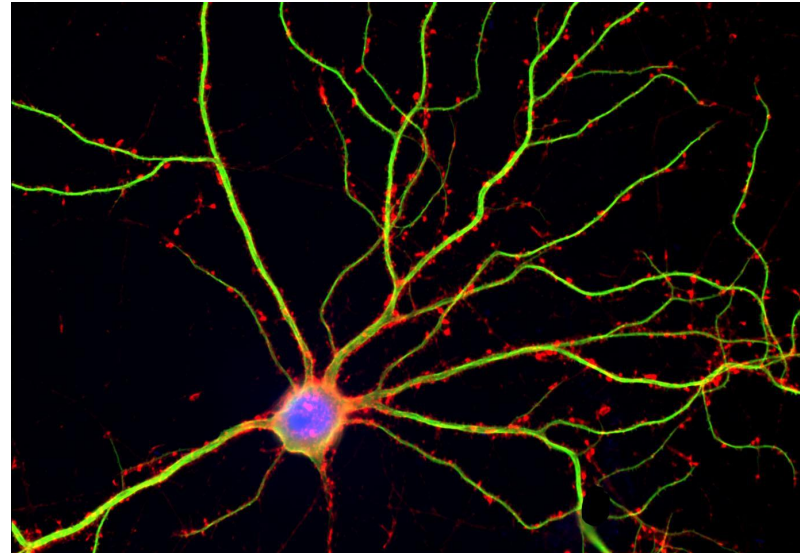
# Strategic Empathy



**EMPATHY + INTENT + BOUNDARIES**

# Tapping into Connection

- **Mirror Neurons:** Brain cells that react both when a particular action is **performed** and when it is **observed**.
- How we learn and recognize emotions in others
- Two-way feedback
- Carefully consider:
  - tone
  - focus (soft vs hard)
  - energy



# Comm. Tips

## DO NOT

Make judgmental/hurtful statements.

- It could have been worse”
- “You are lucky that...”
- “I understand how you feel.”
- “You’ll get over it”
- “Be strong for...”
- “Calm down”
- “Tell me your story”
- Use Clichés

## DO

Choose words carefully.

- “Reactions” vs “Feelings”
- “Tell about experience” vs “Share”
- “Crime” vs “Event” / “Significant Date” vs “Anniversary”
- Name vs “Victim,” “Accuser”

Speak “with”

- “I’m noticing... How would you feel about...”
- Ask for opinion/permission

# Comm. Tips



## Instead of...

## Say...

“But”

“And”

“I understand”

“I can only imagine,” “That makes sense to me,” or reflect.

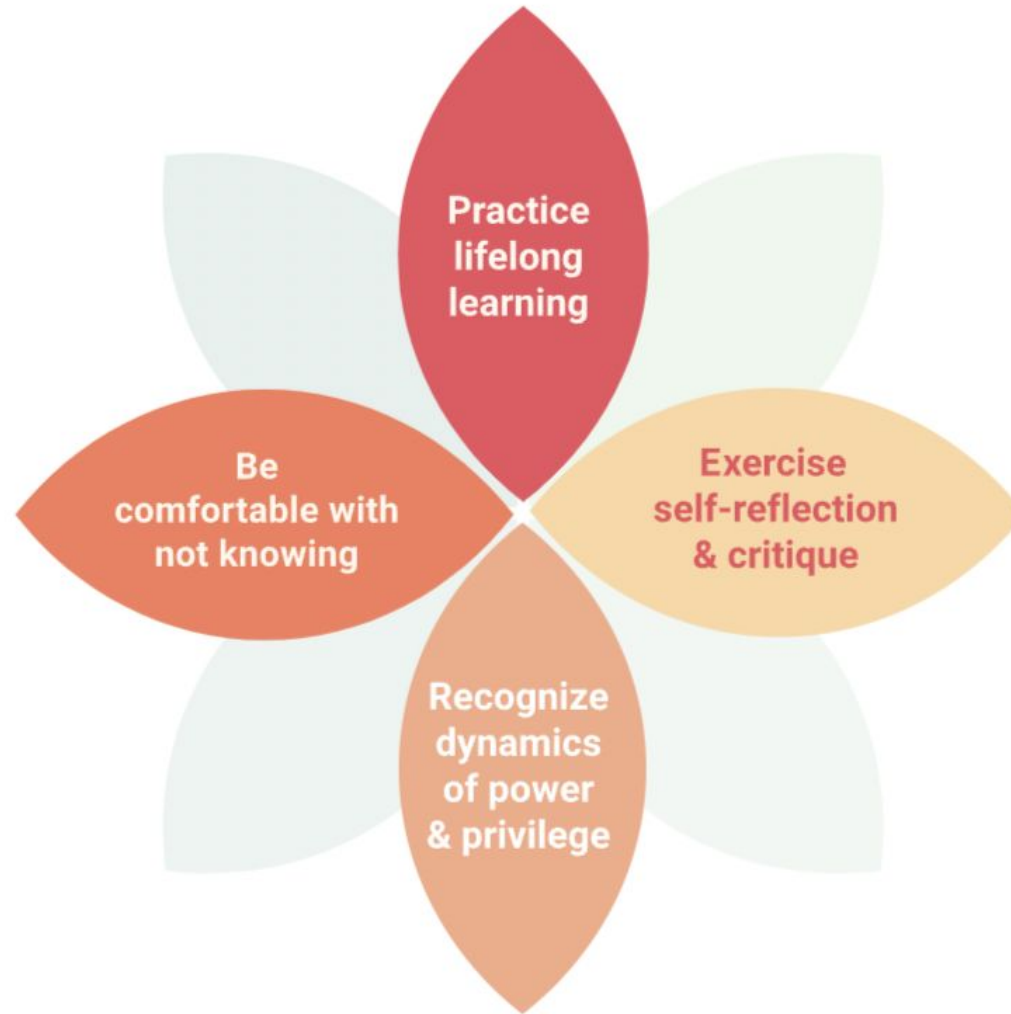
“Why”

“Who, What, When?” *Be intentional with questions*

# Comm. Tips

## **Know yourself and how you are perceived:**

Invest in being informed and engage in cultural humility.



# Comm. Tips

## Warm Handoffs/Wrapping Up

- Tap into their existing coping skills and resources to help them come up with next steps. Summarize what you discussed and what they will do.
- Know your process and limitations
  - Explain from the beginning of the conversation what they can expect from you.
- Internal hand-offs
  - Share details of who and why
  - Consider a 3-way call, meeting or group message
- External resources and community collaboration
  - **988**

## Useful Phrases...

“I know this was really hard to talk about and I want to make sure you are going to be okay...”

- “Is there someone you trust that you can call/talk to?”
- “Have you felt like this before? Was there something that helped you then?”
- “That sounds like a good idea.”

Explain what you can do, then say:

- “What would be most helpful to you right now?”
- “What would you like to do next?”
- “You are in control of what happens next.”

# Remote Conversations

## Telephone

- Warmth, Empathy, Respect are amplified
- Words and tone become emphasized
- Practice blind body language
- If you need to ask a question, **reflect** or **paraphrase** first

## Text or Email

- Start with empathy
- Replace silence with reflection or paraphrasing
- Choose your words carefully and take your time to reflect
  - Try reading your response to yourself out loud
- Use their name if it was given
- Give careful consideration to who has access to these messages
- Use clear and concise language (no jargon)
- Avoid gathering information about the crime, if possible



Questions?

# Practice

Questions

Mirroring

Active Listening

Validating

Reflecting

Paraphrasing

Silence

# Practice/Homework



## **Creating Agreements**

Brainstorm the type of agreements you would need in your groups.

Jot them down. Discuss how you would introduce them to the group.