

Communication Skills

- **Explore meaning of words/phrases**
"What does, 'I feel like a burden' mean to you?"
- **Paraphrase/clarify**
"You were frustrated being in the hospital; tell me more."
- **Ask, "Anything else?"**
"You have said you are weak, tired, and frustrated. Anything else?"
- **Listen for and summarize themes**
"You have talked about how difficult it was making decisions when your father was seriously ill. This conversation can help better prepare your family."
- **Affirm/reaffirm purpose of conversation**
"You say this conversation is hard for you. I hope to help you today, to make it easier to learn how to talk to each other."
- **Verbalize empathy**
"I'm sorry to hear you lost your job. I see that this is very upsetting." (over)

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Additional Communication Techniques

- **Use the Ask-Teach-Ask technique**
When providing information:
 1. First, ASK... what the individual understands.
 2. Then, TEACH...provide information to fill in gaps in understanding.
 3. Last, ASK (i.e., Teach-Back)...assess understanding of information before moving on.
"These are new ideas for many people, so I want to make sure I was clear. Can you tell me what you now understand about _____?"
- **Remain value-neutral**
Avoid words, phrases, or nonverbal expressions that may communicate personal biases or values.
- **Pay attention to nonverbal communication**
(facial expressions, body movements)

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