

Use Your E-A-R for Effective Communication (David D. Burns, MD)

E = Empathy (*Remember... empathy is not acceptance - it's understanding*)

Thought and Feeling Empathy: Summarize what the other person just said - based on what they just said.

Inquiry: Use gentle, non-judgemental questions to learn more about what the other person is thinking and feeling.

The Disarming Technique: Find truth in what the other person is saying, even if it seems illogical, distorted, or self-serving.

A = Acceptance & Affirmation

Affirmation: Convey warmth, caring, respect, and understanding ~ even in the heat of any disagreement. *Have persistent willingness to stay consistent in your communication* and you will notice an eventual improvement to not only **how you feel** but also to how the other person responds to you.

Acceptance: We are all imperfect beings living in an imperfect world. Other people rarely act in ways that we prefer. Most life adversities come from other people. *Remember to accept yourself, others, and life with unconditional acceptance.* Other people have value, regardless of their flaws.

Other people are just as worthy as you are, no more and no less. ***We don't have to like something in order to accept it.***

R = Respect

“I Feel” Statements: Express your own feelings and ideas openly, when timely. i.e. “I’m feeling X, Y, and Z right now,” (refer to any variety of *feeling words*, such as anxious, hurt, sad, worried) and do it without blaming, shaming, or complaining.

One person’s boundary (mutual-respect line) cannot make another person change. It may give them good reason to choose to change, but they always retain their own “power of choice.” We may not like it, if they choose not to change - but we would do well to accept that they have a right to choose for themselves.

Your “*power of choice*” includes your ability to let them know how their behaviours are impacting you, and to offer them a chance to stop the damage to the relationship. You do this by taking responsibility - and by *calmly, clearly, and consistently communicating your boundaries.*



Counselling, Seminars, Training
For Better Mental Health



mentalhealthfa.ca

<https://calendly.com/mentalhealthfa>

