

SKILLS for DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Three characteristics of a difficult conversation:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Reflection:

Emotions: 1. 2.

An identity challenge:

Recognizing Emotion Cues:

Dr. Olson: I wanted us all to sit down in person so we could talk about where we're at in Ryan's care and also talk about some of the next steps.

Sheryl: Fine.

Dr. Olson: So it's helpful for me, so I know where to begin, is to first hear from you guys what you know already know about Ryan's current condition, and also from your perspective how you think things are going?

Sheryl: What I know about how things are going?

I thought the purpose of today's meeting was for you to tell me what you know, because from where I'm sitting it seems like you don't know what the heck's going on with my son.

Josh: Mom calm down, give her a chance to speak.

Sheryl: I won't calm down; this is my son we're talking about.

Write out your NURSE statements:

1. Naming
2. Understanding
3. Respecting
4. Supporting
5. Exploring

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NURSE RESPONDING TO EMOTION WITH EMPATHY

	WHAT YOU SAY OR DO	COMMENTS
N-Name	"That sounds really frustrating."	Acknowledges the emotion. In general, turn down the intensity when you name the emotion (e.g. scared becomes concerned).
U-Understand	"I can't imagine what you are going through." "I could imagine many people in your situation might feel..."	Acknowledges or normalizes the emotion or situation. Avoid suggesting you understand or relate to their experience, because we often cannot.
R-Respect	"I can see you really care about your mother."	Expression of praise or gratitude about the things they are doing.
S-Support	"We will do everything we can to support you through this process."	Expression of what you can do for them and a good way to express non-abandonment. Making this kind of commitment can be a powerful statement.
E-Explore	"Can you tell me more about..."	Often emotion cues are expressions of underlying concerns or meaning. Combining this with another NURSE statement can be very effective and help you understand their reasoning or actions. Make sure to avoid judgment and come from a place of curiosity.