

# The Dialogue

A method for fostering self-awareness, authenticity, candor, trust, and intimacy with others.

A method for discussing thoughts, feelings, experiences, problems, concerns, and conflicts.

## Invitation and Reply

[Choose who will be the sender and who will be the receiver.]

Sender: I would like to have a Dialogue. Is now OK?

Receiver: I am available now. Or I will be available in \_\_\_ minutes. Or I will be available at \_\_\_ o'clock.

## Listening/Mirroring

Sender: [Using "I-statements."]

I think \_\_\_\_\_. Or I feel \_\_\_\_\_. [Or shares experience using "I-statements".

Sender tries to express content in small "chunks" to help receiver.] That's it.

Receiver: [Mirrors/reflects.]

What I hear you say is \_\_\_\_\_. [Receiver uses sender's language.] Have I got you?

Sender: Yes. Or Yes, you got most of it. [If a part is missing, sender repeats it or clarifies it.]

Receiver: [Continues to reflect and mirror content until the sender has completed the message.]

Receiver: Is there more about that?

Sender: No. I feel heard.

Receiver: Let me see if I got all of that. [Receiver summarizes.] Have I got it all? [If sender adds to the summary, receiver reflects those statements, then asks Have I got you? No further summarizing is needed.]

Sender: Yes, you've got me.

[Note: When sender is finished speaking or clarifying during the initial communication, receiver may say, "I would like to ask a clarifying question," and then follow with a question. The question may not be analytical, interpretive, or express frustration with or criticisms of the sender. Mirroring and reflecting content then continues until the sender feels heard.]

## Validating Thinking

[Receiver indicates understanding of sender's thinking, logic and "truth." Receiver indicates understanding of sender, not necessarily agreement with sender.]

Receiver: You make sense because... Or, It makes sense given that you... Or, I can see what you are saying because... Then: Have I understood you?

Sender: Yes. Or No. [If "no," sender clarifies.]

Receiver mirrors/reflects until sender feels understood.

## Empathizing with Feelings

[To empathize with the sender's feelings and to avoid expressing thoughts or opinions about the receiver's sharing, the receiver states feelings as one word, such as "mad," "sad," "glad," "afraid."]

Receiver: I can imagine that you might be feeling... Or, I can imagine that you might have felt...

Or, I can see that you are feeling... Then asks: Is that what you are/were feeling?

Sender: Yes. Or No. [If "no," sender clarifies.]

Receiver mirrors until sender feels heard and says: "I feel heard."

Receiver: Are there other feelings you would like to share?

Sender: No. Thank you for listening to me.

Receiver: Thank you for sharing with me.

[Receiver may choose to become sender at that time, or choose to reflect upon the Dialogue the two have just had and respond at a later time.]

*Adapted from work by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D. Last revised 3/9/19*