

Skill Starters

Memorize these and use them to start the use of these communication skills.

1. (For you to say to yourself) "What's happening? What communication skill can I use?"
2. (For you to say to yourself) "I'll change what I'm thinking about and focus on something that helps me feel better."
3. "Thank you for telling me what you think. Would you also please tell me how you feel?"
4. "May I tell you how I feel? Holding in my feelings can make things worse."
5. "I can't make you happy. But I can show you how I care by how I respond to whatever's going on."
6. "Being honest tells you that I really care."
7. "Can we do a Do Over?"
8. "May I please make just a suggestion?"
9. "I feel uncomfortable. May we talk?"
10. "I feel upset. Maybe I'm afraid of something."
11. "I know we've just met, but I have a reservation."
12. "I've been thinking about something. May I make a request?"
13. "I think we've been here before. This may be a pattern. May we talk about it?"
14. "Let's call a Time Out and set a Time-In to get back to this later."
15. "Would you please not call me that, and instead, maybe suggest an action I can change."
16. "May we talk about what you just said? Maybe it's an incorrect assumption?"
17. "May I tell you what I assume you might be feeling?"
18. "May I tell you what I assume you may be thinking?"
19. "May I briefly make a suggestion?"
20. "May I summarize what's been said?"
21. "Is your sarcasm helping this conversation?"
22. "I can't fix the past. Where do we go from here?"
23. "Would you please tell me what you heard me say?"
24. "This feels confusing. Let's try to focus on just one problem at a time."
25. "You're really upset about this."
26. "I think you might feel uncomfortable about this."
27. "Would you please tell me what you think I'm feeling about this?"
28. "This conversation is getting difficult, but don't worry. We are okay. This is a safe place."
29. "I feel uncomfortable. May we talk about something else?"
30. "May I tell you what I understand you are asking for?"
31. "Thank you for asking, but what you are asking for is not what I want to do."
32. "Am I always that way?" "It will never change? Is this really the situation forever?"
33. "What can we do now to help this situation?"
34. "Our relationship is important. Let's set regular times to talk about how we're doing."
35. "Let's keep a journal about what works and doesn't work for us."
36. "Thanks for telling me what you're thinking and feeling. Do you want some feedback?"
37. "We have been struggling with this for quite a while. Let's get a coach or a counselor."
38. "Let's practice these skills in different ways."
39. "I've heard I'm the creator of my own life. Can that really be true?"
40. I'd like to feel free to discuss this situation.