A SMALL WORKBOOK FOR MORE CONNECTED CONVERSATIONS

Let's Talk About It

A gentle guide to healthier communication, one conversation at a time.

Communication is more than finding the right words. It also means listening, checking what you heard, and making room for different experiences. You do not have to agree on everything to communicate with care.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Think of a conversation you want to approach differently. Choose a time when everyone feels safe enough to talk. If emotions run high, it is okay to pause and return later.

What is one conversation I would like to handle with more care?

What do I hope the other person understands?

Small changes in how we listen can make room for connection.

LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

Make Space to Listen

Active listening helps people feel heard, even when perspectives differ.

TRY THESE FOUR HABITS

1. Put distractions aside. 2. Let the other person finish. 3. Reflect back what you heard. 4. Ask before assuming.

A SIMPLE LISTENING SCRIPT

"What I hear you saying is..."

"Did I understand that correctly?"

"What would feel supportive right now?"

When I feel misunderstood, what helps me feel heard?

One listening habit I want to practice:

Listening is not the same as agreeing.

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN WITH CARE

Use “I” Statements

Share your experience without assigning blame.

THE FOUR-PART FORMULA

I feel [emotion] when [specific situation] because [why it matters]. I would appreciate [clear, realistic request].

EXAMPLE

Instead of: “You never listen to me.” Try: “I feel dismissed when I am interrupted because I want to finish my thought. Could we take turns speaking?”

Try rewriting a difficult message using an “I” statement:

WHEN A CONVERSATION GETS HEATED

Pause. Unclench your jaw. Take a slow breath. You can say: “I want to continue this, but I need a short break. Can we come back in 20 minutes?”

A pause can protect a conversation, not end it.

PRACTICE AND REFLECT

Your Connection Plan

Choose one small action to try this week.

One person I would like to communicate with more openly:

A conversation starter I can use:

When I feel overwhelmed, I can pause by saying:

After the conversation, I will check in with myself by asking:

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT ALONE

Therapeutic Empowerment & Wellness (TEW) offers therapy and mental health services via telehealth across Maryland. Learn more at therapeuticempowerwellness.com.

Educational resource only; not a substitute for individualized mental health care. If a conversation feels unsafe or involves threats or coercion, prioritize safety and seek appropriate support.