

Activity #2

Communication Techniques: Empathy

Examples of Empathetic Statements

1. This sounds like a tough situation.
2. I can only imagine how difficult this is for you.
3. It sounds like you have been going through a lot.
4. That sounds so frustrating.
5. I can see how important this is to you.
6. I can imagine this might feel...
7. This must be very frightening news to hear.
8. You sound very angry/frustrated about...
9. That sounds difficult, let's look and see what we can do to assist with...
10. I can only imagine what you thought when he/she...
11. It seems like that would be upsetting.
12. That sounds like a rough situation to be dealing with.
13. That must have been a pretty painful experience for you, you sound...
14. Seems like it would be difficult not to feel...
15. I can only imagine how overwhelming this feels right now.

Empathetic Versus Sympathetic

Empathy is our attempt to understand what the caller is feeling and the communication of that understanding to the caller.

- In this sense, empathy is a “shared” experience.
- Empathetic statements help build rapport with clients.

Sympathy is our attempt to remove the caller from their feelings so they (we?) will feel better. Sympathy is something we “extend” to them.

The following statements below are things that Community Resource Specialists should NOT say to callers. Write a similar statement for each one that would be appropriate to say.

1. I feel so awful for you!

2. I will find a way to solve this problem for you.

3. You poor thing! I know exactly how you feel.

4. Just let it out. You must be so depressed!

5. I can't believe he would do that to you!

6. That is so unfair.

7. I understand what you're going through.

Drawn from *The Art of Feedback: Coaching I&R Specialists*, AIRS webinar, March 24, 2016, content provided by Connect2help211, Indianapolis, IN