

# OFFER COMPANIONING

This is a communication skill that:

- ❁ REQUIRES DEEP LISTENING
- ❁ IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN WE DON'T HAVE AN "AGENDA"
- ❁ IS MEANT TO SUPPORT AND EMPOWER, NOT FIX OR RESCUE
- ❁ PRIMARILY CONSISTS OF SILENCE AND OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
- ❁ REQUIRES TRUST IN THE OTHER'S PROCESS

## OPEN THE DOOR...

...with open-ended questions:

*What's happening?*

*What is it?*

*What are those tears?*

## OFFER RECEPTIVE SILENCE

Give them the space to speak fully, to tell the whole story. Be fully present with deep concentration and compassionate curiosity. Shield yourself with detachment, so you can walk intimately with them without taking on their feelings.

## ASK CUP-EMPTYING QUESTIONS

Follow their lead and ask questions that allow them to empty their cup and get to the heart of the matter.

Use *what* and *how* questions, not *why* or *which*.

*"How was that for you?"*

Take your cues from their words:

Speaker: *"I'm really worried."*

Listener: *"What worries you?"*

Speaker: *"I'm just not sure."*

Listener: Either remain silent or ask,

*"What are you unsure of?"*

## FOCUS ON SENSORY CUES

Concentrate on and even repeat words they use that involve seeing, hearing, feeling, sensing.

Speaker: *"It was the most beautiful sunset I ever saw."*

Listener: *"Beautiful..."*

Speaker holds arms over stomach.

*"What are you holding?"*

*"What is happening in your stomach?"*

Speaker is yelling, *"This place is so stupid!"*

Match their volume. *"What's stupid about this place?"*

Speaker is crying: *"What are those tears?"*

## ASK VIRTUES REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When they seem to have gotten to the heart of the matter or the core issue, ask a question that helps them to reflect on a virtue that will help them. About something that is frightening, *"What would give you the courage to ...?"* or *"What would give you peace about this?"*

## ASK CLOSURE AND INTEGRATION QUESTIONS

*"What was helpful about talking?"*

*"What's clearer to you now?"*

*"What did you appreciate about this meeting?"*

## GIVE A VIRTUES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is an essential step in restoring the speaker even if your companioning was brief and did not include all these steps.

*"I appreciate your openness to explore this."*

*"I see your loyalty to your family."*

*"I honor you for your courage to face this."*

