

COVID-19 TIPS AND TOOLS

Our current situation is sure to cause a lot of anxiety for the individuals we serve. This tool can help you support people when faced with challenging conversations and scenarios. This could include stress and anxiety about: new staff, day program or work changes, closures of favorite places (church, restaurants etc.), changes with family contact, routine, or even just anxiety about the illness itself, and not knowing what to expect next. Be ready: use this trauma-informed tool to support people to help them feel connected. Just because people may be a little more "isolated", they should not feel "alone."

THE TOOL: "REFLECT, HONOR, CONNECT"

This tool can help guide you with how to "be" with people and be supportive in a trauma-informed way. Often, we feel we must fix the problem or give people direction for what they need to do to make it better, when actually they just need us as a support. If a person is upset, anxious, agitated, feeling unsafe, etc., this will help you make the connection with them so your words and supports reach them during a challenging situation. It also helps a person feel seen and heard during difficult times.

WHAT IS IT?

REFLECT: Reflect back what you heard the person say or feel, or what you are seeing from their actions. Do this with compassion and kindness.

HONOR: Honor by recognizing their courage/strength/resilience for trying, coping, surviving and sharing their words/feelings/actions, understanding that it is a survival strategy, not a behavior.

CONNECT: Connect them to safety, supports, positive outcomes, resilience building, etc. Often use "ask, don't tell." This gives the person control of the situation, instead of you (which is important).

WHAT COULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

General examples:

R: "I can see how frustrated you are. Looks like you're having some pretty big feelings."

H: "Thank you showing me in the best way you know how."

C: "How can I help you feel safe?"

R: "I see how hard this is for you; stuff like this can be a little scary."

H: "Thanks for sharing with me and trusting me with your feelings."

C: "Is there anyone else you'd like to talk with about this, or any way I can help?"

More specific examples: (Can't see mom, change in routine, worried about having enough food)

R: "Oh gosh Tommy, I can see how upsetting this is for you and I can hear it in your voice. I bet it feels like everything is changing really fast and it hard to know what's happening next."

H: I see you're trying really hard to understand (hold it together, stay kind, etc.) – thank you for that...I think you're brave."

C: Some examples: "Can we learn more about this together?" "Wanna go for a walk and blow off some steam?" "Can we skype with your mom so you can see her and hear her voice?" Do you want to make a schedule together so we can get used to our new routine?" "How about we make a grocery list together, and I will make sure we have what we need..."