

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 17

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheet 12](#))

Validation

VALIDATION MEANS:

- Finding the kernel of truth in another person's perspective or situation; verifying the facts of a situation.
- Acknowledging that a person's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors have causes and are therefore understandable.
- *Not* necessarily agreeing with the other person.
- *Not* validating what is actually invalid.

WHY VALIDATE?

- It improves our relationships by showing we are listening and understand.
- It improves interpersonal effectiveness by reducing:
 1. Pressure to prove who is right
 2. Negative reactivity
 3. Anger
- It makes problem solving, closeness, and support possible.
- Invalidation hurts.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO VALIDATE

- The valid (and *only* the valid).
- The facts of a situation.
- A person's experiences, feelings/emotions, beliefs, opinions, or thoughts about something.
- Suffering and difficulties.

REMEMBER:

- Every invalid response makes sense in some way.
- Validation is not necessarily agreeing.
- Validation doesn't mean you like it.
- Only validate the valid!

Note. Adapted from Linehan, M. M. (1997). Validation and psychotherapy. In A. Bohart & L. Greenberg (Eds.), *Empathy reconsidered: New directions in psychotherapy* (pp. 353–392). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Copyright 1997 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted by permission.

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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 18A

Identifying Validation

For each A and B pair, check the more effective response.

- 1A.** Think about your day when the other person is talking about his or her day.
- 1B.** Throw yourself into listening about the other person's day.

- 5A.** Remember that people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors don't always match. Check the facts.
- 5B.** Assume that you can tell exactly what people are feeling and thinking.

- 2A.** If you are uncertain of people's thoughts and feelings, ask them what they are thinking or feeling, or try to imagine yourself in their situation.
- 2B.** Assume that if people want you to know what they are thinking or feeling, they will tell you.

- 6A.** Evaluate other people's behaviors and thoughts, and tell them that they are wrong or that they should be different when you feel sure you are right.
- 6B.** If you do not agree with what another person is doing or thinking, try to understand how it could make sense if you understood the causes.

- 3A.** Observe the small clues that indicate what is going on in social situations.
- 3B.** Observe only what people say, and ignore nonverbal signals.

- 7A.** Assume that if you tell a person his or her request of you makes sense, that's all you have to do to validate the person.
- 7B.** When a person asks you for something, giving the person what has been asked for is validation.

- 4A.** Jump to conclusions about what people mean.
- 4B.** Realize that the same behavior can mean many things.

- 8A.** Assume that other people's reactions to you have nothing to do with yours to them.
- 8B.** Treat each person with respect and as an equal.

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 12

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 17, 18](#))

Validating Others

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Fill out this sheet whenever you practice your validation skills and whenever you have an opportunity to practice even if you don't (or almost don't) do anything to practice. Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

Check off types of validation that you practiced (on purpose) with others:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Paid attention. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Expressed how what was felt, done, or said made sense, given the causes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Reflected back what was said or done, remaining open to correction. | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Acknowledged and acted on what was valid. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Was sensitive to what was unsaid. | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Acted authentically and as an equal. |

List one invalidating and two validating statements made to others.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe a situation where you were nonjudgmental of someone in the past week.

Describe a situation where you used validation in the past week.

Who was the person you validated? _____

What exactly did you do or say to validate the person? _____

What was the outcome? _____

How did you feel afterward? _____

Would you say or do something differently next time? If so, what? _____

