

Listening to Hear: Removing Hidden Barriers and Offering Grace

Weekly
**Community
Conversations**
#ThanksToMaddie

Jennifer Toussaint
Chief Animal Control Officer
Animal Welfare League of Arlington



Land and Labor Acknowledgement

What happened in the past shapes our present.
Many harms – injustices – reverberate to this day.

To begin to repair those harms, we tell the truth,
both about the harms, and about the people whose lives and contributions
have been made less visible as a result.

Thus, we acknowledge that the land we are on here in Arlington
was the homeland of the Nacotchtank people,
who became part of the Piscataway nation.

Billy Redwing Tayac was their most recent hereditary leader.

We also acknowledge that the prosperity of what we now know as Arlington
was built in large measure on the stolen labor of people of African descent,
including some five dozen who labored at Arlington House, which was the
County's symbol for many decades.

We remember in order to move forward and repair past harms.



Getting in the Right Mindframe



Space and Grace

Crisis and Conflict

Crisis is defined as a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger.

Conflict is a disagreement or argument.

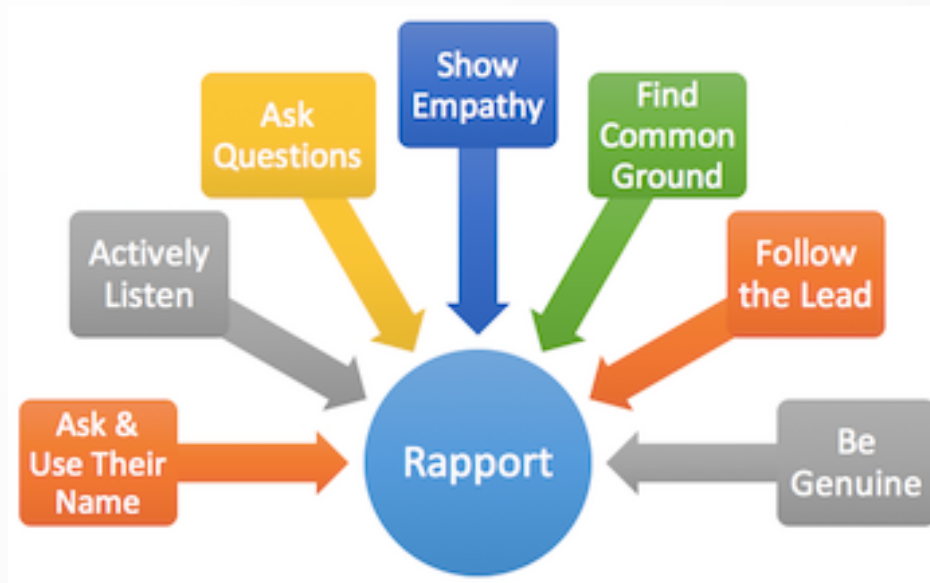


Purpose of Active Listening

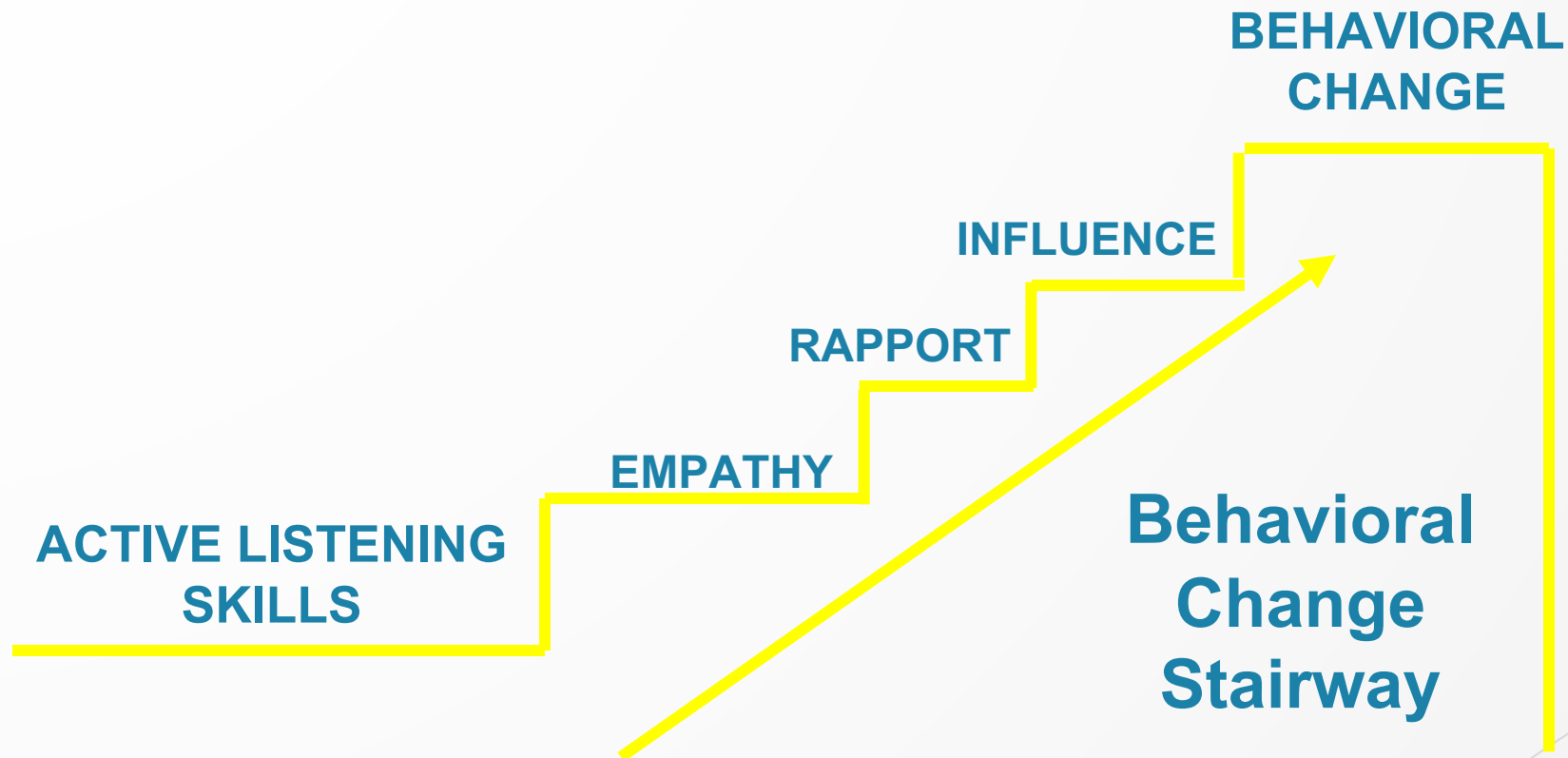
Establish rapport and understanding

Gather information

Encourage behavioral change



Objective: Influence Behavioral Change and Come to a Resolution



Credit: Dallas Leamon, Arlington CIT



We are not going to internalize or take personally the response and feelings expressed by others.

How to Start

Garner the person's name politely while introducing yourself (do not assume a relationship and use nicknames/shortened names)

Assess the environment to remove distractions and increase personal safety

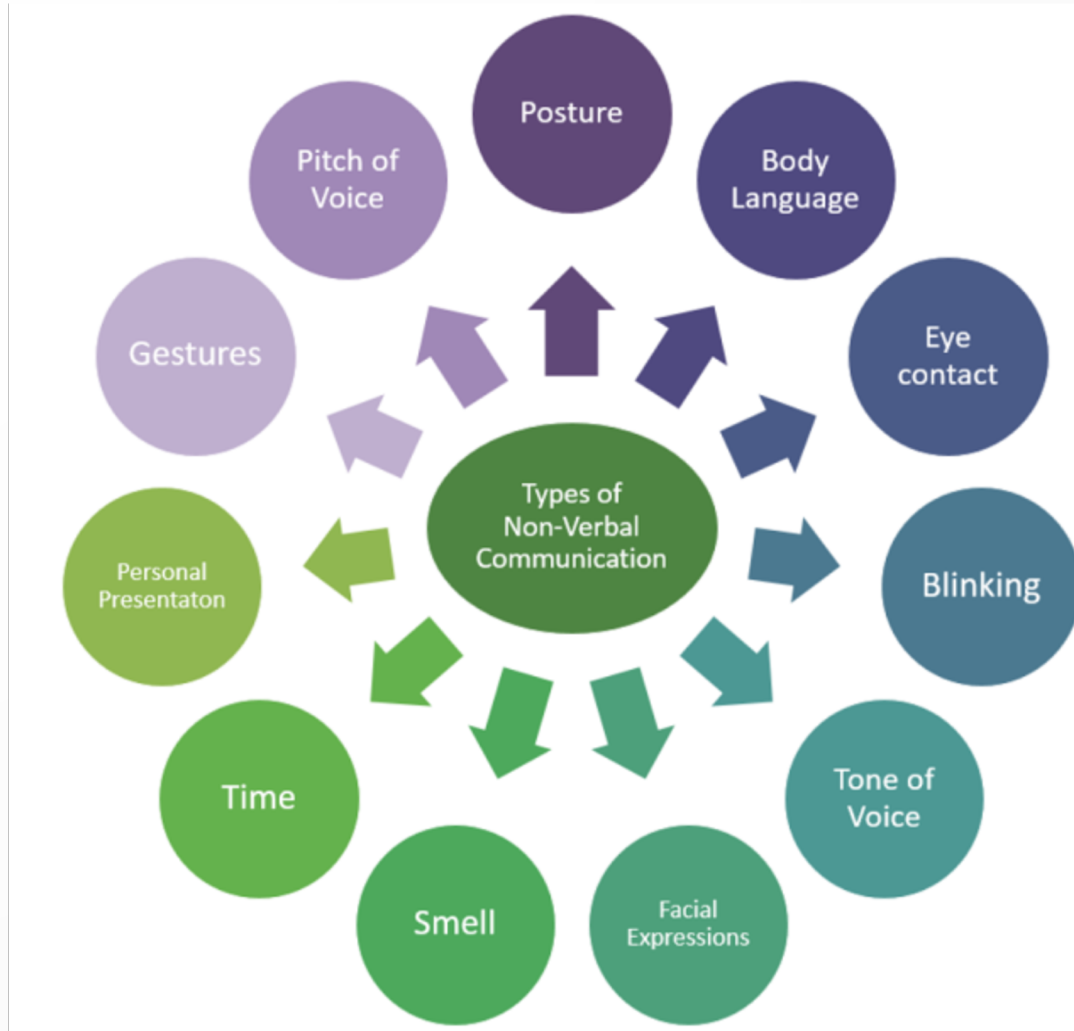
Assess the seriousness of the situation and if backup is needed (do not corner or be cornered) and if a mental health concern is possible

Adjust your tone, stance, appearance as necessary and when safe. Be authentic and honest!

Understand that you don't understand. We don't know the trauma of those around us.



Verbal vs Nonverbal Communication



Ensuring we are being culturally responsive is very important

Barriers in Communication

Criticizing, judging

Engaging in a debate

Threatening language

Minimizing their feelings

Not listening, i.e. formulating your response before you have heard and understand their situation

Allowing distractions in the environment to interfere (checking your watch/phone counts)

Self Orienting

Explicit and Implicit Bias- Project Implicit

Tone of “Voice”

- The WAY something is said (tone, inflection, rate) can be 5x more important than WHAT is said.
- Tone of voice, demeanor, & projected sincerity are more important than any single phrase that you may use.
- Communication is 38% is how I talk, 55% is how I look, 7% is the words I use
 - Albert Mehravian, Ph.D. of UCLA



Emotion Labeling

Statement of emotions perceived (underlying emotions as well)

“You sound angry...”

“You seem hurt...”

“I hear loneliness/frustration...”

“You sound upset...”

Adverse reaction? - Easy to back out of:

“I didn’t say you were angry, I said you sound angry.” (Soft delivery)

Remember- if you label incorrectly the person will let you know, and that is O.K.
“I’m sorry, thank you for clarifying that for me.” The underlying emotions the person is experiencing they might not be aware of. “I can hear anger in your voice, but it appears this situation has hurt you also.”

Paraphrasing

BRIEFLY describe in YOUR own words what the consumer/person is saying to express understanding and attentiveness.

“What I’m hearing is...” “You feel that...”

Consumer/Person: “I am frustrated and angry that I have explained this all before and the “front desk woman” wasn't paying attention to what I was saying or needed.”

Officer: “You don't feel she was listening to you.”

Mirroring/Reflecting

Really helpful initially while trying to build rapport.

Consumer/Person: “I am (pissed off) that my neighbors called you out here to check on my dogs, my dogs are fine and they know it. It really makes me angry when people get in my business.”

Officer: “It makes you angry” (voice inflection up/down can encourage person continuing or express understanding) Can also increase rapport.

Open-Ended Questions

Questions that require more than a “yes” or a “no”

“What...?” “**How**...?” “**When**...?”

What happened to you and your pet today?

How would you like this to work out.....?

How can I help you today?

When did you begin to feel this way?

(E.g.- Respond out to a hoarding situation with a warrant. The member of the public expresses she is uncomfortable with the male officer standing so close to her (begins to get combative)

This will help:

Conveys a sincere interest in gaining understanding

Gives an opening for responsive feedback without over directing

Limits feelings of interrogation/judgement/over questioning

Minimal Encouragers

Warning- Do not overuse: will lead to lack of understanding, the conversation going off track, you losing attention to content of what is being said, dis-trust

“Yes... Yeah... Ok... Uh huh....”

Keep the conversation moving and the consumer/person talking because you seem attentive to what they are saying. People want to be heard!

Great tool when combined with other skills!

Empathy

Perspective Taking

Staying out of Judgement/Non-self orienting

Respect the dignity and humanity of those we interact with

Recognizing Emotion

Communicating that Emotion

Let's Not Problem Solve- Stay in the Moment, Keep Listening



Rapport

Mutual trust is now established,
determination of next steps begin to be
discussed

Do not make promises you do not intent to
keep!

Phrases/Comments Damaging to
Establishing Rapport: “I understand” “I know
how you feel” “Calm down” “You
should/shouldnt..” “I think..” “Why”

Better Phrases/Comments: “I’m listening”
“I’m here to help” “I can tell how (X) you
are”



Effective Pauses

Great tool for over the phone de-escalation (they will eventually stop to ask if you are still there)

Shows that there is a give and take (see-saw) in conversation

Pause after something really meaningful is shared or said, focus on a productive and appropriate response



Follow Up

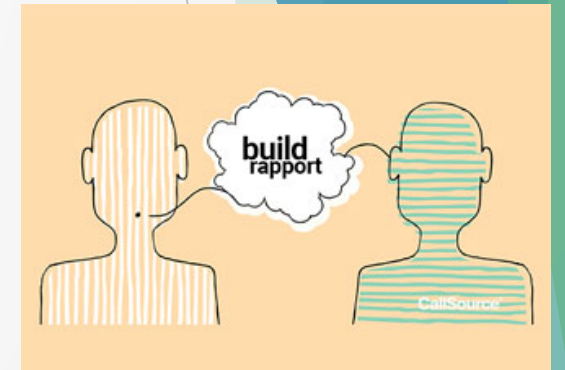
Once an agreed upon resolution is met:

Follow up is vital!

Did you promise to come back to check up on the individual/pet? Offer to come back with a resource?

Shows you were engaged and 'want to assist in resolving the issue'

If cannot be resolved in the moment, set a reasonable timeframe and then follow up with updates until situation is resolved.



Remember Basic Coaching Plays

1. Introduce Yourself
2. Ask for their Name
3. Label the Emotion
4. Paraphrase

Important not to take offense to emotions directed at you, everyone has the right to be upset, overwhelmed, angry, defensive



What Does It Look Like For Us?



Scenario: Animal Hoarding



Scenario: Stray Reclaim



Scenario: Animal Cruelty

PEOPLE.COM > CRIME

Va. Man Accused of Throwing 2 Dogs Off High-Rise Balcony to Their Deaths

Zachary Hanson, 26, of Arlington, faces multiple animal cruelty charges

By Harriet Sokmensuer | May 01, 2020 04:17 PM



Type here to search



Scenario: Animals Left at Your Door

Last night at around 9pm, Officer Davis discovered three little kittens left in outside our front doors! She quickly brought them inside for a warm meal and a good night's sleep, and today our team will be doing a medical check-up, vaccinations, and then sending them to a foster home. They are very cute and we are looking forward to watching them grow!

To whomever dropped these kittens off: we want you to know that they are safe and happy. Thank you for bringing them to AWLA where you know they would be cared for. We would love to know a little more about them and their history, so please feel free to contact us anytime - you will not be judged, you won't be in trouble. You'll be helping us, and maybe we can of assistance to you, as well.



5896... 🍷 620

25 Comments 43 Shares

Questions? Scenarios?

Jennifer Toussaint

Chief Animal Control Officer

Animal Welfare League of Arlington

jtoussaint@awla.org



**Maddie's
Fund**

#ThanksToMaddie