

Putting Away the Hammer and Picking Up a Different Tool

A GUIDE TO COMMUNICATING BETTER



As inviting as it may be to see everything as a nail waiting to be hit with your problem-solving hammer, when communicating with others, whether it be a colleague, coworker, partner, spouse, or child, different tools are needed – unless that person has asked for a solution. See below for five other tools that are available to you.



REFLECTING STATEMENTS

- So, what you're saying is...
- You're thinking that...
- You tend to feel X when Y happens



EMPATHY STATEMENTS

- That sounds really difficult
- I would be upset too
- I am so sorry this happened



VALIDATING STATEMENTS

- I understand how you would see it that way
- It makes sense that you feel that way.
- We will get through this



HAVING CURIOSITY

- Tell me more / Tell me more about what is going on
- What was it like when that happened?
- How often does this happen?



PHYSICAL CUES

- Eye contact with "um-hmm"
- Eye contact with head nodding
- Matching your facial expression with the tone of the conversation