

Moving from Establishing Empathy to Engaging the Person in Discerning Best Action



1. Focus on the moment and what's manageable:

- a) "What seems like the next best step for you to do?"
- b) "What is one thing you can do, right now?"
- c) "How can I be helpful to you, right now?"

2. Listen for and reconnect them to their strengths to open their minds to solutions:

- a) "I heard your frustration and anger. I also saw your strength. You seem to have some ideas about what you'd like to do about this."
- b) "Who helps you see your strengths?"

3. Focus on the recent past, when the challenge was not a barrier for them:

- a) "I noticed recently that you were able to ____ (feel or act in a certain way). What was different about that time?"
- b) "Sounds like this has come up for you in the past. Is there anything about how you dealt with it then that would be helpful to remember now?"
- c) "When you felt this in the past, what was one of your strengths that allowed you to deal with it?"

4. Change perspective and focus on desire to change:

- a) "What do you see as the benefits of dealing with this challenge?" "What might be the effects if you do not?"
- b) "If you could have a clear head and light heart right now, what do you imagine you would do?"

5. Recognize when the person feels stuck and assist them to think about what it would take to become unstuck: (If you want to offer suggestions, be sure to ask for permission first.)

- a) "You seem stuck right now. Do you need some time before you can think about next steps?"
- b) "Who is 'on your team' that you trust to offer suggestions?"
- c) "You seem a bit stuck when it comes to ideas for what to do next. Would you like me to offer some options to get your own ideas flowing?"
- d) "We both have seen others face similar challenges, would it be helpful to talk about what we remember worked for them?"