

AE



Multnomah
County

Department of County Human Services

Assertive Engagement Video Module Series Supplemental Packet



For more information and resources, please contact

The AE Facilitation Team: aeinfo@multco.us

Acknowledgment

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities historically led movements for racial equity and social justice and were the first to establish social and cultural frameworks for person-centered work. None of the content in this training would be possible without this history. Assertive Engagement draws from several theories, approaches, and lenses such as Strength-Based Practices, Trauma-Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing, Nonviolent Communication, Racial Equity Lens (REL), Adult Learning Theory, Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, et al. As this curriculum continues to evolve it is the goal that it fully embodies these foundational frameworks and practices.

This video module series was developed, directed and produced by Helen Vank, Senior Assertive Engagement Training Specialist and Rhea Graves, Assertive Engagement Initiative Coordinator. Special thanks to Alex Gerald, Justin Hamburg, and Freelin Hummel for supporting this project.

This video module series was created to meet the need for a self-guided training option to acquire a baseline understanding of Assertive Engagement 101. This e-learning series, along with participation in the required skills practice session will offer participants a more flexible opportunity for AE certification.

Training Goals Module 1

- Receive an Introduction to Assertive Engagement (AE) and how it works
- Learn the definition of AE
- Introduction to Mindfulness as a practice
- Introduction to Reflections
- Recognizing the Righting Reflex
- Discover how to use Ask Offer Ask
- Wrap up with a short quiz

Training Goals Module 2

- Discover Challenge Circles and the ways we learn
- Discover the three sets of AE
- Compare models of Social Service
- Identify Types of Trauma
- Wrap up with a short quiz

Training Goals Module 3

- Understand a Strengths Based Approach
- Recognize and Withhold Judgment
- Explore Implicit Bias
- Examine Social Identity
- Compare In Group and Out Group Relationships
- Wrap up with a short quiz

Training Goals Module 4

- Learn how to use the Motivational Interviewing tools known as OARS:
 - Open-Ended questions
 - Affirmations (*Module 5*)
 - Reflections
 - Summary
- Explore how to hold ambivalence for the people we work

with using OARS

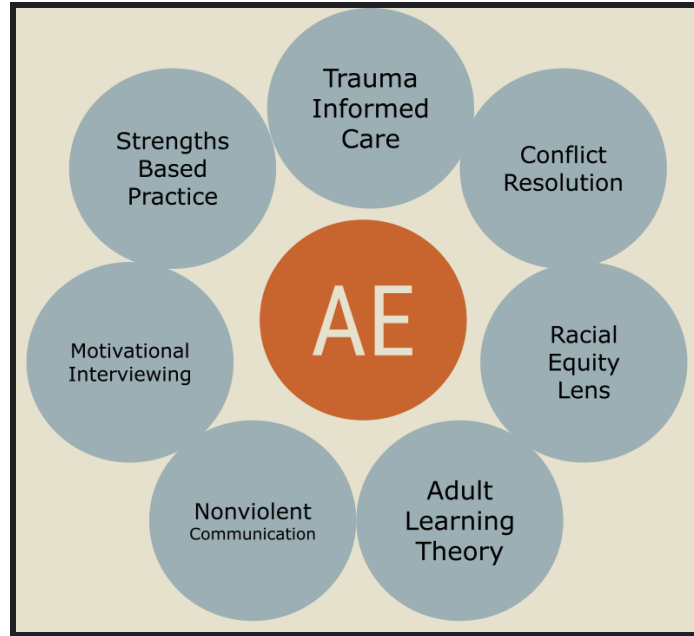
- Examine some common Roadblocks to Listening
- Wrap up with a short quiz

Training Goals Module 5

- Compare Growth and Fixed Mindsets
- Using Affirmations (the A of OARS) to encourage Growth Mindset
- Examine self-compassion and how it can increase empathy and support Growth Mindset
- Review the Common Factors Theory and explore the role Hope plays in making progress towards change
- Wrap up with a short quiz

Training Goals Module 6

- Introduction to Conflict
- Navigating Conflict with AE Tools
- Learning how Care plays a part in our work
- Identifying types of Care
- Discover what it means to use care to resource ourselves and others
- Wrap up with a short quiz



Module 1

What is AE?

Our Definition

Assertive Engagement "AE" is a **social service approach** to working with people that **honors them as the experts** in their own lives. AE can apply holistically to participants, service providers, supervisors, agencies, and systems to **help navigate** relational **power dynamics** and to **cultivate empathy** within all types of interactions.

What are you thinking and feeling?

In AE, the definition of **empathy** is "understanding someone's perspective and letting them know you understand."





ASK OFFER ASK



Ask what they already know



Ask permission to provide new information

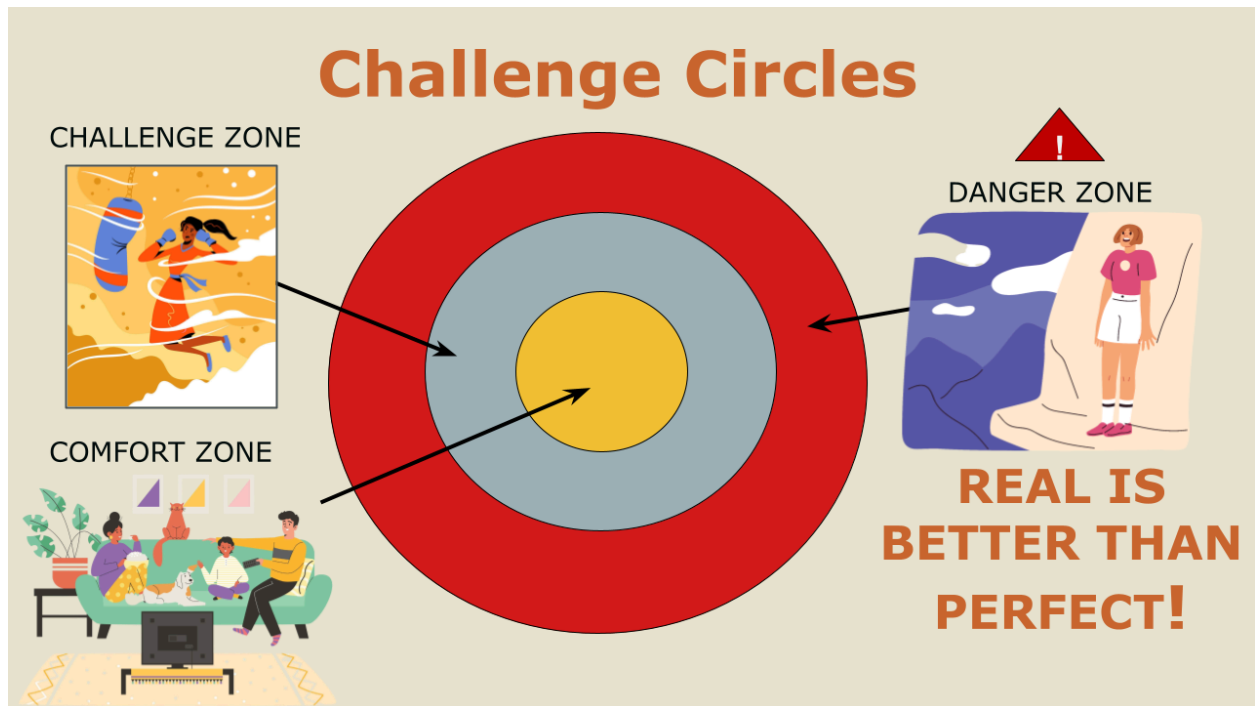


Offer the information



Ask what they think

Module 2



Challenge Circles

Comfort Zone - Very little effort and energy, necessary for restoration and healing.

Challenge Zone - Effort and energy expended, necessary for growth and achievement of new skills and learning.

Danger Zone - Fight/flight/freeze response takes over, necessary for survival.

Real is better than perfect! Do what you need to do to engage in the learning, staying in your Challenge Zone.

Which zone are you in?

Check which zone you would be in during each of these examples:

| Example | Comfort | Challenge | Danger |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Talking to someone you don't know at a training | | | |
| Talking about issues of race at work | | | |
| Working out at a gym or community center | | | |
| Making a mistake in front of your boss | | | |

Reflection

How Do You Know Your Work Is Working?

What are the people you're working with saying or doing that let you know your work is working?



Take some time to reflect on this in your journal or in this packet. Pause the video if you need more time.

What Makes Your Work Work?

What are the things you do or say that leads to success with the people you work with? Pause the video if you need more time.

The 3 sets of AE



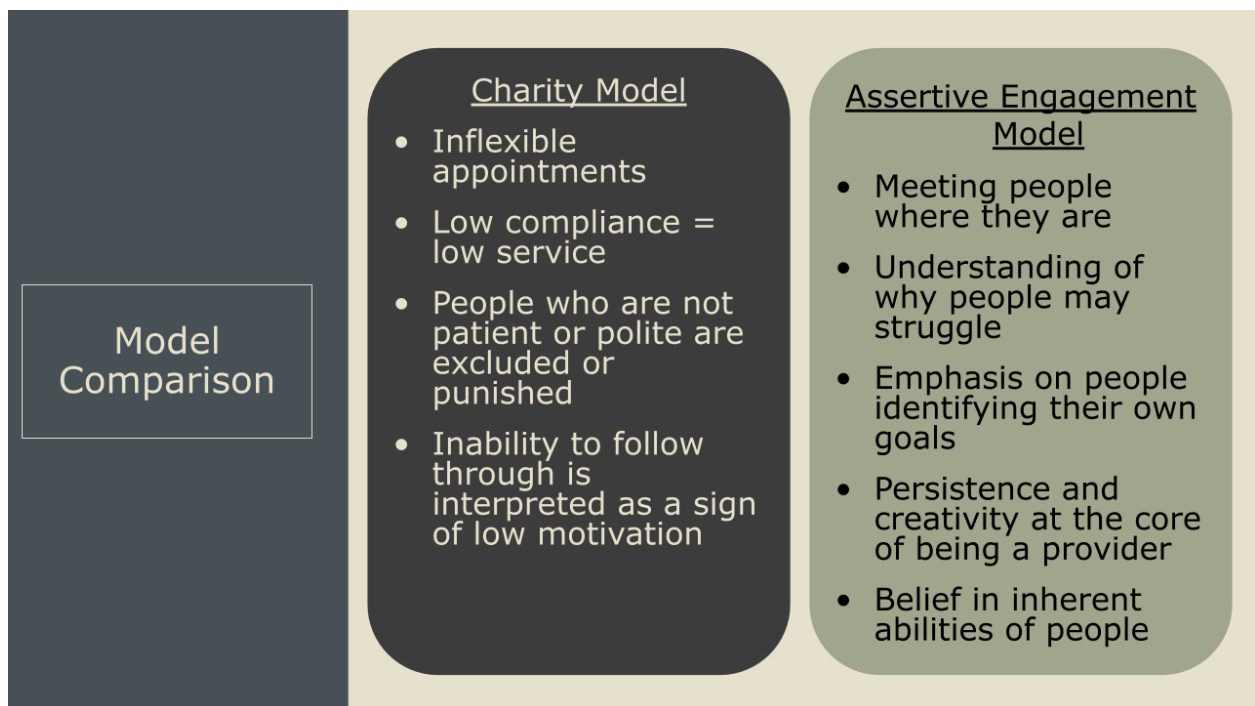
Heartset = How we feel about and how we treat the people we work with



Mindset = How we think about the people we work with



Skill Set = How we do our work



Tenets of Trauma Informed Care

- **Trauma Awareness:** Understanding the prevalence and impact of trauma among clients and staff
- **Safety:** Policy and practice reflect a commitment to provide physical and emotional safety for clients and staff.
- **Choice & Empowerment:** Key to trauma informed service delivery; facilitates healing and avoids re-traumatization.
- **Strengths Based:** Honors the inherent strengths of individuals as the experts in their lives to bring about positive change.

What is Trauma?

“Trauma describes experiences or situations that are deeply painful and distressing, and that overwhelm people’s ability to cope, leaving them feeling powerless.”

Center for Non-Violence & Social Justice

“The result of trauma is disconnection. Disconnection from yourself (body, spirit, mind, emotion), family, culture, ancestors, spirituality, purpose, community, or history”

-Hun Taing, Trauma Healing Expert



Acute Trauma

(Single Incident)

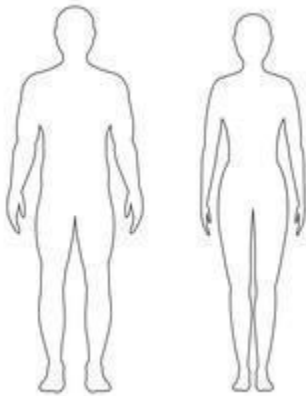
- Car accident
- Survivor of a crime
- Natural disaster
- Surviving a house fire
- Witnessing a violent situation or act

Chronic Trauma

(Repeated/Prolonged)

- Oppression
- Domestic violence
- War, Genocide, Occupation
- Poverty
- Bullying/Stalking
- Discrimination
- Microaggressions
- Covid-19

Journal Reflections



Where do these emotions live in your body?

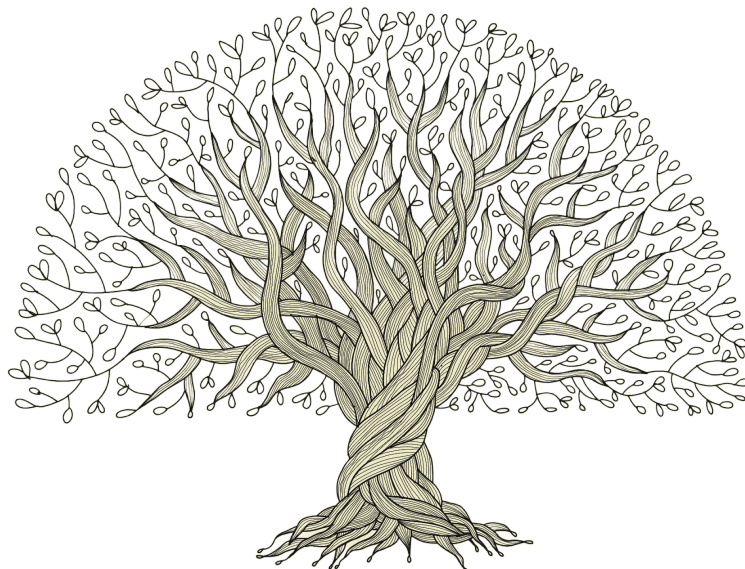
- Joy
- Stress

How might this information help you...

- Express those emotions
- Diffuse trauma responses?

Intergenerational Trauma

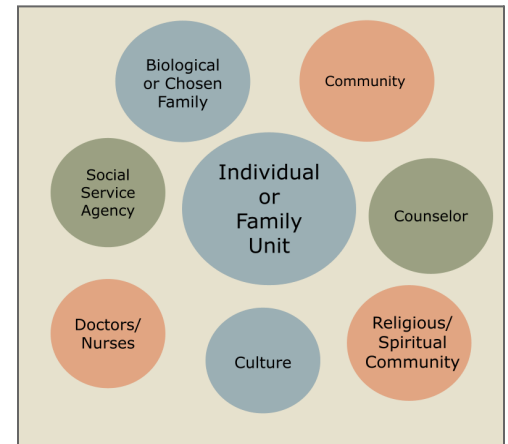
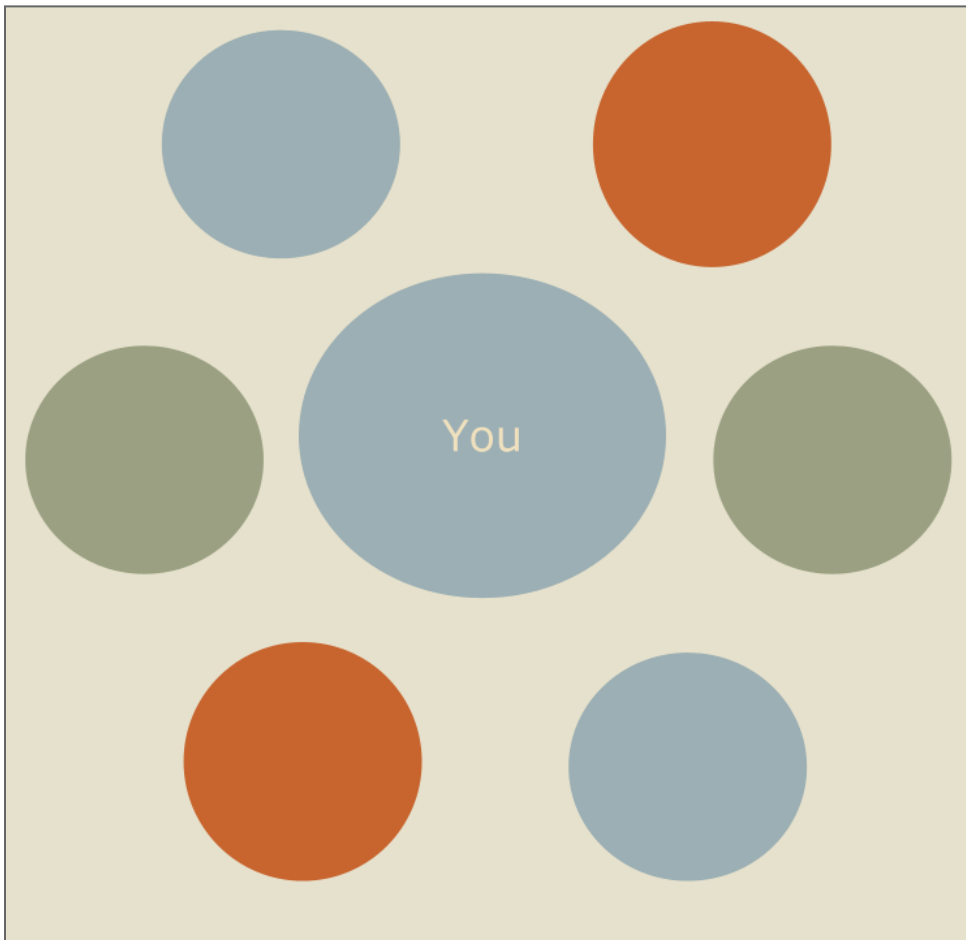
“Intergenerational trauma is the exposure of an earlier generation to traumatizing conditions that continue to affect the subsequent generations physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Exposure to trauma and its associated symptoms can persist over generations, contributing to cycles of poverty, substance abuse, violence, and pervasive health inequities.” -- (Greywolf, 2011 & Bloom, 1997)



Module 3

Principles of Strength Based Practices

- It is goal oriented
- Systematic assessment of strengths
- Environment is seen as rich in resources
- Connections between strengths and goal attainment are made
- The relationship is hope inducing
- Choices are created and clients have the authority to choose



Complete a Power Map for yourself who can you lean on for support.

Judgment

Thinking back to a time when you felt judged, reflect on the following questions (pause the video if you need more time):

How did you know you were being judged?

How did it feel?

What was the impact on the relationship?

What judgments might come up in the following scenarios?

Someone asks for rent assistance wearing a large diamond ring.

You see a pregnant person drinking a glass of wine.

Scenarios: Multiple choice

For each of the following scenarios, think about which answer indicates that the provider is withholding judgment.

Scenario 1



A young woman walks into a housing support agency, with 2 children. Dave, an employee of the housing support agency, works at the front desk. Dave sees the young woman approaching and hears her saying, "Just *shut up* Joseph, I don't have time for this, sit down with your sister here." She turns to Dave and places both hands on the desk and leans in while asking, "211 referred me, I'm getting evicted, can you help?"

Which one of these indicates that Dave is withholding judgment?

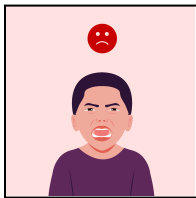
A: Dave says, "Wow...you've called 211? I'm surprised they sent you here."

B: Dave says, "Ok, you've started with 211, can I ask you a few questions to determine if you meet our eligibility requirements?"

C: Dave says, "There's no need to be aggressive, please have a seat and wait until you're called."

D: Dave says, "We also have information on parenting classes. Would you be interested in that?"

Scenario 2



Dani works in an after school program. Raphael, a third grade student, is sent to their office for fighting. Dani is trying to finish their payroll data entry before the end of the day. This is the 3rd time Raphael has been caught fighting this week. Dani thinks to themselves, "Not again. I wish he could just control his anger."

Which one of these indicates that Dani is withholding judgment?

A: Dani sighs audibly and rolls their eyes before saying, "What did you do this time?"

B: Raphael starts to explain the situation, but Dani cuts him off and says, "You know the rules, 3 strikes you're out. Let's call your parents."

C: Dani takes a moment to take a deep breath, turn away from the screen, and remember their role is to support all youth in the

program. Dani invites him to take a seat and asks, "Can you tell me what happened?"

D: Dani motions for Raphael to have a seat, while they continue typing on their computer. Raphael tells Dani that someone made fun of his family and that's why he hit the other student. Dani turns to Raphael finally and says, "Ok, good story. Why is it always someone else's fault?"

Implicit Bias



Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Social Identity

Complete the Social Identity wheel below. Pause the video if you need more time.



Which identities do you think about most often?

Which identities do you think about least often?

Which of your own identities would you like to learn more about?

Which of your identities have the strongest effect on how you see yourself?

What important identities are not on this wheel?

In Group & Out Groups

People who share the same social identities as you are in your in group. People with identities that are different from yours are in your out group. The more you expand the parameters of the grouping, the more people you include in your in group.

Module 4

Open-Ended Question Guide

“Tell me more...”

This question is an invitation for the person to share more information, about an idea, thought, feeling, goal, if they like. Allow them the opportunity to decline.

Ask about their goals and values

This question invites the person the opportunity to share and allow you the privilege to understand what they want and what is meaningful to them.

Look back

If folks are having a hard time imagining how to move forward in their current situation, ask them to look back in their life to see if they’ve experienced something similar in the past that they were able to work through. Then ask what they did to work through the issue. Ask who was there to help them, and what resources did they have. Ask what resources might be available to them now. Getting someone to examine a time when they got through a complicated issue can ground them in abilities and strengths they can use now to get them through their current situation.

Look Ahead

This is an important framing for recognizing and instilling hope. Ask them to look forward to a time when their goal is met.... What did they do to get there? Why did they do it? Just making that picture for themselves might open up a door to even a small change that moves them in that direction. Invite them to look ahead and see themselves having success. The more they can picture specifics, the better you are able to work together to make a plan towards that goal. Hope and motivation are precious and should be carefully nurtured.

Decisional Balance

This really is a framing of ambivalence. You present both sides you’ve heard from them and ask what could tip their scales and where they are in that process. More direct than a reflection, it asks them to examine and talk about their ambivalence and by doing so, just *might* allow them to make the

decision that they feel is best for them at the time. The goal is not to force the decision, but explore their options more deeply.

Ask about reasons or needs

Allows them to share their *why*. It can help you understand what are things they may like to achieve vs what things are non-negotiable.

Query Extremes

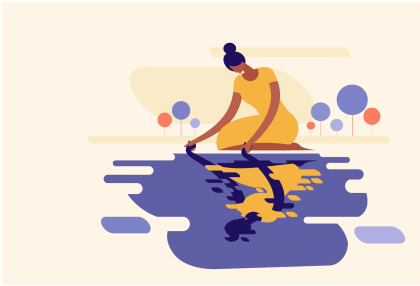
Ask about the best and worst things they envision happening if they make a decision or don't make a decision. Gives them a chance to consider the consequences of their choices to act or not act based on either side of their ambivalence. Once they give you a worst case, ask what they would do if that happened.

Scaling

These questions are really powerful because they ask the person to take stock about where they are in the process. This provides them and you direct information about where they are in process or decision. Ask them to rate their motivation, importance, confidence, excitement... on a scale from 1-5 or 1-10. Lay the scale out for them then ask them to rate themselves. When they give you a number, note it. If they rate something as low importance, ask them follow up questions around why they are in one spot instead of another. You could also ask what it might take to move them from a 2 to an 8. This allows them to examine where they are, why, and what it would take for them to change.

Source: Adapted from Motivational Interviewing

Reflections



Offer reflections by:

- using the same **words**
- restating the **meaning** in your own words
- naming the **emotion** you hear

Summary

A form of reflection that allows you to gather up parts of a conversation. Summaries can re-engage worn out conversations, allow you to transition or wrap up, slow down a conversation, and show the person you are listening.

Ambivalence

Ambivalence means feeling two opposite ways about the same issue or concept at the same time. When we hold ambivalence, we reflect back both sides of what the person feels without judgment or leading them to one side over the other.



Thomas Gordon's 12 Roadblocks to Listening

In AE, we know that listening with sharp ears, sharp eyes and an open heart are critical. In order to ensure that we truly listen, we first need to identify other forms of communication that have their place.... but are *NOT* listening. Explore these carefully and identify the ones you tend to use under stress or if you slip into places of judgment.

- ☐ **Ordering, directing, or commanding**—a direction is given with the force of authority behind it. Authority can be actual or implied.
- ☐ **Warning/threatening**—similar to directing but carries an implication of consequences if not followed...such as a threat or prediction of a bad outcome.
- ☐ **Giving advice, making suggestions, providing solutions**—using expertise and experience to suggest a course of action, *prior to eliciting the client's ideas/knowledge or asking permission*
- ☐ **Persuading with logic, arguing, lecturing**—the practitioner believes that the client has not adequately reasoned through the problem and needs help in doing so.
- ☐ **Moralizing, preaching, telling clients their duty**—a person needs instruction in proper morals.
- ☐ **Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming**—implies that something is wrong with the person or what has been said.
- ☐ **Agreeing, approving, praising**—gives sanction or approval to what is being said; takes away the tension of the person having to examine the issue
- ☐ **Shaming, ridiculing, name calling**—intent is to correct a problematic behavior or attitude; is disapproving in manner or attitude
- ☐ **Interpreting, analyzing**—looking for a hidden meaning or interpreting, when there is no data to support the observation you are making.
- ☐ **Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling**—trying to make the person feel better about the problem. Downplaying of emotions, difficulty of the issue
- ☐ **Questioning, probing**—asking questions like an investigator; asking questions on non-relevant material, just out of curiosity; person feels like they are on a firing range as the target
- ☐ **Withdrawing, distracting, humoring, changing the subject**—implies that what the person is saying is not important, has the quality of minimizing

Module 5

Tips for Building a Growth Mindset

Use this activity to help you think about incorporating your own growth mindset into activities where you have a hard time seeing personal improvement. Consider how your attitudes about your own strengths and challenges are influencing messages you share.

- In the first 3 boxes, write down a skill or something you know you do well.
- In the 4th box, write down something that you would like to improve on or learn.
- Consider how you got good at each of the skills you listed below. Write down 2-3 things that helped you build each skill.
- Finally, reflect on how you got good at the first 3 skills; make a list of similar strategies to help you improve the thing you want to learn or improve.

Example:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>I'm good at: Cooking</p> <p>How I got good:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Watched my grandma and dad cook the big family meals and joined them in the kitchen2. Watched cooking shows and looked up recipes online3. Tinkered with dishes that were "almost there" until I got delicious results | <p>I'd like to improve at:</p> <p><i>Speaking Spanish</i></p> <p>How I will improve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learning app2. Conversation groups3. Closed Captioning |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Growth Mindset Worksheet

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>I'm good at: _____</p> <p>How I got good:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> | <p>I'm good at: _____</p> <p>How I got good:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> |
| <p>I'm good at: _____</p> <p>How I got good:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> | <p>I'd like to improve at: _____</p> <p>How I will improve:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> |

Source: **Institute For Youth Success** at Education Northwest

Affirmations

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Affirmations</p> | <div data-bbox="683 338 777 432"></div> <p data-bbox="808 344 1110 470">Praise is me telling you what I think about you</p> <div data-bbox="683 531 777 632"></div> <p data-bbox="808 543 1127 695">Affirmations are me reflecting what <i>you</i> tell me about your strengths</p> <p data-bbox="808 735 1127 806">REAL is better than Perfect!</p> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- ☐ What are some affirmations you could give for folks you see in your work?

Self-Compassion

There are three elements to self-compassion:

1. Self Kindness vs Self Judgment
2. Common Humanity vs Isolation
3. Mindfulness vs Over-identification



Showing yourself kindness and patience has been shown to increase the kindness and patience you extend to others.



Hope

Hope is integral to our success and the success of those we work with. However, we must be able to identify and hold it!

Take a few minutes to write down what gives you hope

- How do you hold hope for yourself?

- How do you see the folks you work with hold hope for themselves?

- How do you hold hope for those you work with?

Module 6

Conflict is between opposing opinions or needs.

Conflict is about the person's perception. Yours and the perceptions of others. (These might look very different.)



Conflict is an opportunity to build a shared understanding and a stronger working relationship.

Think of an incident of conflict in your work.

What happened? What did you say?

What did the other parties say? How did you feel?

What were you thinking?

Did the conflict have resolution or an outcome you desired?

How could things have gone differently using AE?

AE tips to Connect through Conflict

- Use Reflections to acknowledge conflict and name emotions
- Use clear and concise language
- Listen and practice withholding judgment
- Beware of Roadblocks to Listening
- Try to understand the other person

Care



Care is the process of protecting someone or something and providing what they tell us they need.

Self-care is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health.

In what ways can you show care for your community?

In what ways can you show care for yourself?

Tiny SURVIVAL GUIDE

PROTECT YOUR MORNINGS
[or whenever you wake up]
less cortisol, more intentionality

 **GO OUTSIDE**
[or look outside]
perspective, context + something larger than this

BE ACTIVE
[avoid stagnation]
in body, mind, spirit

CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS
those that are edifying + healthy

NURTURE GRATITUDE
what is one thing, right now, that is going well?

 **DETOX**
if navigating addictions
be wise + safe

SPEND TIME WITH ANIMALS
↓ stress hormones, ↑ comfort 

SIMPLIFY
[less is more]
be mindful of decision fatigue + cognitive overload

ADMIRE ART
the gift of feeling transported

 **LAUGH**
pure humor = a sustaining force

FOSTER HUMILITY & EXTEND GRACE
self-righteousness + hubris = unhelpful

SLEEP
to cleanse + repair brain + body

CLARIFY INTENTIONS
how can i refrain from causing harm, how can i contribute meaningfully?

© The Trauma Stewardship Institute 2020

References and Resources

Empathy video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

Flipping Your Lid video

<https://youtu.be/3bKuoH8CkFc>

“We Shall Remain” video

<https://youtu.be/Gs0iwY6YjSk>

Implicit Bias definition

<https://communityactionpartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CAPwhat-is-IB.pdf>

Implicit Bias video

<https://www.pbs.org/video/pov-implicit-bias-peanut-butter-jelly-and-racism/>

Implicit Bias test

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Growth Mindset video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1CHPnZfFmU>