

Interpersonal Communication Techniques
De-escalation

LISTEN	AFFIRM	RESPOND	ADD
Demonstrate you are listening and trying to understand. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal attending • Nonverbal attending 	Find an authentic way to connect to your shared humanity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude • Appreciation • Normalization • Acknowledgement • Agreement 	Share the impact they have had on you or others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts • Feelings • Beliefs 	If appropriate, offer directions for continued learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Relationships • Opportunities • Information

Step One: Listen

- In a debate, when you are listening to your opponent, you listen for errors in their position, to counter with facts in an effort to make them look foolish. With LARA, listen until you hear the moral principle that they are speaking from, a feeling, or an experience that you share. Listen until you find a way in which you can open yourself and connect with them.
- Try to understand what lies at the core of the question: Fear, uncertainty, anger, perhaps frustration.
 - What might their voice inflection or emotional state tell you?
 - What assumptions might their question or comment demonstrate?
 - It's also important to listen to what the person is actually saying. In trying to understand what might be behind the question or comment, we don't want to miss what the person literally said.

Step Two: Affirm

- This is a step we do not usually think about in a conscious way. Express the connection that you found when you listened, whether it's a feeling, an experience, or a principle that you have in common with the other person.
 - Affirm whatever you can find in their question or statement(s) that represents a reasonable issue or a real fear. If you can't find anything, there are other ways to affirm.
 - The exact words don't matter—the important part is to convey the message that you're not going to attack or hurt the other person and that you know that they have as much integrity as you do.
- To actually be affirming, this step must be genuine.

Step Three: Respond

- We often start here. Wait. Listen. Affirm.
- Debaters, politicians, (and sometimes the rest of us) often avoid answering the difficult questions or responding to difficult comments. With LARA, respond if you are able. Respond to the issue the person raised.
- Sometimes it seems that the person does not really want information but is simply trying to share their feelings or to connect with you. Response is not always necessary, or may come in subtle forms.
- Personal insights and experiences often reach people in a way that abstract facts do not.

Step Four: Add Information

- It may help the other person to consider the issue in a new light or redirect the discussion in a more positive direction.
- This is a good time to state whatever facts are relevant to the question the person asked. This may involve correcting any mistaken facts they mentioned; you can do this now because now that you've made a personal connection, the other person is probably more open to hearing your facts than they would have been if you had started there.
- Some other possibilities include offering resources (such as books, organizations, or specific people) or adding a personal anecdote.



Interpersonal Communication Techniques

Elicitation

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS	AFFIRMATIONS	REFLECTIVE LISTENING	SUMMARIZING
'Yes' or 'No' Questions "Say more about ..." "What does that mean for you?" "What feelings are coming up"?	"I appreciate that ..." "It seems like you care a lot about ..." "I admire that ..." "That must be difficult to..." "I'm happy for you, that ..."	"What I'm hearing is ..." "Is it accurate to say that ..." "You're feeling that ..." "You're thinking that ..." "You're struggling with ..."	"When I think about what you've shared, what stands out is ..." "It seems you've experience 'A', 'B', and 'C.'" "If I was to summarize what you've shared, I'd say ..."

Ask **O**pen-ended Questions:

- Cannot be answered with a yes or no.
- Unsure as to where the answer might lead
- Avoid "why" questions.
- Examples
 - Closed: "Do you think Med school is right for you?"
 - Open: "What do you want your next 10 years to look like?"

Affirm:

- Highlight characteristics and strengths
- Find the positives
- Examples:
 - "It seems like you really care for your family."
 - "I really appreciate your honesty."
 - "I admire your willingness to share this with me."

Listen **R**eflectively:

- Statements, not questions
- 3 purposes:
 - Let's participant know you understand what's being said
 - To underscore something
 - To defuse hostile emotions
- Examples:
 - "It looks like you..."
 - "You've noticed that... You're also worried that..."
 - "It sounds like..."
 - "You're surprised/angry/confused/frustrated..."

Summarize:

- Demonstrates you've been listening
- Provides opportunity to shift the conversation
- Most appropriate after lengthy segments of dialogue
- Allows the facilitator to reiterate key points