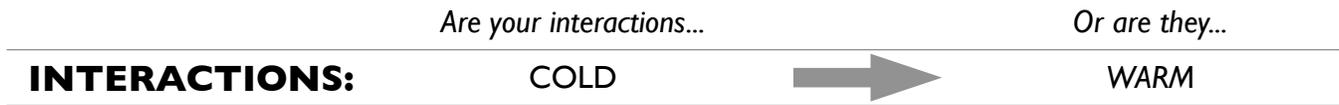


Elements of Companionship Study Guide

Instructions: Use this study guide to learn about the Elements of Companionship. Use these Elements to help you self-assess your skills as a gentle teacher.



REFLECTION QUESTION: Are your interactions filled with **warmth** and compassion?

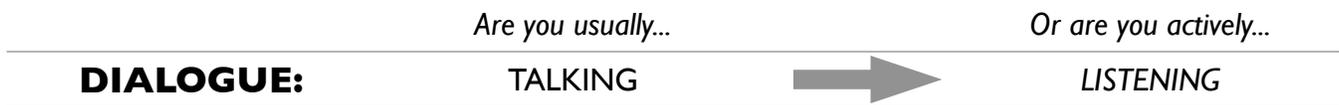
DEFINITION: “how we use our hands, eyes, words, and presence when we are with the Individual.”

DISCUSSION: We should work toward being warm in our interactions, showing compassion and care toward the Individual, instead of being cold, showing indifference and insensitivity.

Warmth is what fills the cold space between you and the other person. It is the gift that we bring to those who are troubled. Warmth comes from the heart. It is the acceptance of each person where he or she is at.

You give a loving word to the person who curses you. You stay peaceful with the person who spits in our face. You stop for a moment every time you see or go by a person. You greet everyone.

FREE RESPONSE: Why do you think its important to be warm when an Individual is happy? How might this help when the Individual is experiencing an area of difficulty?



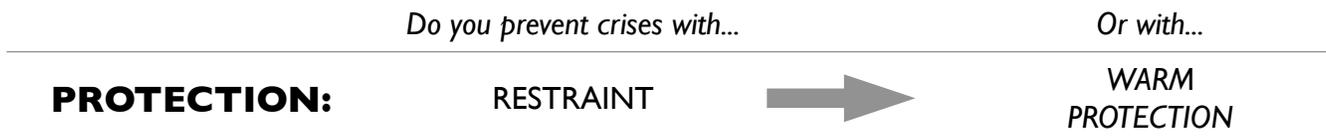
REFLECTION QUESTION: Are you **actively listening** to the Individual, regardless of his/her methods of communication?

DEFINITION: “how well we interpret the Individual’s words, tone, and body language; and how we respond to that message.”

DISCUSSION: We should work toward being attentive listeners instead of tuning out the other person’s needs and wants. Active listening involves: 1) hearing the message that is being communicated, 2) figuring out the meaning of the message, 3) repeating the meaning back to the speaker to show understanding, and 4) responding to the speaker’s meaning with your tools.

Our communication with the individual should be back-and-forth, where neither person is doing all of the talking. Keep in mind that if an Individual does not speak verbally, there are still many ways in which you can share dialogue with that Individual (such as with gestures, facial expressions, sign language, PECS cards, etc.)

FREE RESPONSE: When talking with other people, do you wait to hear what they have to say before formulating your response -- or are you already creating your answer before they’ve finished speaking? Why is this distinction important?

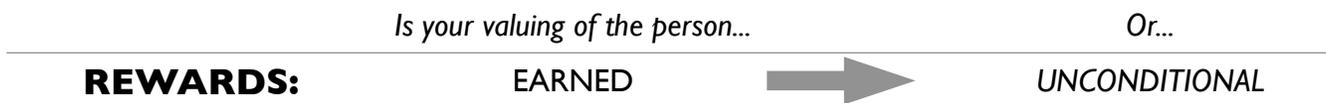


REFLECTION QUESTION: When the Individual feels unsafe, do you provide comfort with **warmth**?

DEFINITION: “how we prevent crisis situations and how we respond when they occur.”

DISCUSSION: Protection has to do with two areas: 1) how we evoke a deep sense of peace during good moments as well as difficult ones, and 2) how we prevent harm without provoking more violence. The key to warm protection is to make sure that we give a deep memory that the person is safe with us during good moments. This memory then helps us prevent violence during difficult times.

FREE RESPONSE: Why do you think that building the relationship during good moments will help you to respond effectively in difficult moments?



REFLECTION QUESTION: Do you honor and reward the Individual **unconditionally** despite the areas of difficulty that arise?

DEFINITION: “how often, and on what occasions, we value the individual.”

DISCUSSION: Giving unconditional love is the center-piece of caregiving. It is an on-going expression of deep warmth toward each person regardless of what the person does. It is simply given with nothing expected in return.

You are teaching a sense of loving oneself and others. A person cannot learn to feel loved unless he has a feeling of self-worth. You are teaching the person to feel loved by you and others and at the same time to love oneself. This love is self-respect, a profound feeling that “I am somebody!” Learning to feel loved arises out of self-esteem, and self-esteem propels each person to feel loved by others and to love them as well.

Some caregivers might say, “She just wants attention!” but you understand that what the person needs is a deep sense of love.

Exhibiting bad “behaviors” is not “acting up” -- instead, it is caused by not feeling safe and loved. Therefore, we don’t punish bad behaviors and reward good behaviors. We value the person for who he is, not what he does, using unconditional rewards to teach the person that he is good.

FREE RESPONSE: What does it mean to reward unconditionally?



REFLECTION QUESTION: Do you view the Individual as a client or a **friend**?

DEFINITION: “how well we view and treat the person as a friend instead of a client.”

DISCUSSION: This is the central life-project that we have in the act of caregiving. The person is neither above us or below us. We regard the person as our friend, our equal, and as filled with gifts and talents. You see no distinction in value due to appearance, race, poverty, diagnosis, behaviors, or life-story. We focus on each person’s goodness.

FREE RESPONSE: What can you do to build your friendship with an Individual?



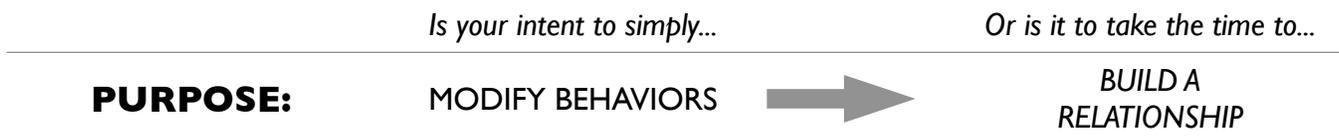
REFLECTION QUESTION: Do you and the Individual engage in activities **together**?

DEFINITION: “how well we involve the individual in meaningful activities.”

DISCUSSION: We do activities, tasks, and daily events with the person, even for the person. We see these as vehicles to bring us together, and over time, to help the person become a more active and self-initiating participant. Although you also seek to maintain old skills and teach new ones, your primary focus is not on skill acquisition or behavioral correctness, but on mutual participation.

Each person has to learn that it is good to be with us, do things for us, and do things for one another.

FREE RESPONSE: How might engaging the Individual in meaningful activities help to build her self-worth?

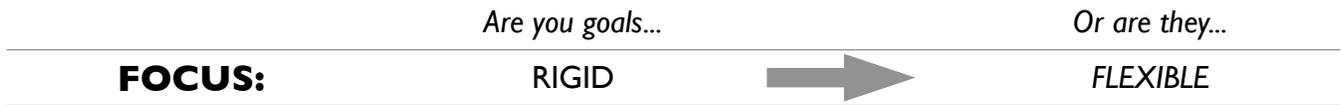


REFLECTION QUESTION: Is your goal to modify an Individual’s behavior or to **build a relationship**?

DEFINITION: “how we view and carry out our role as caregivers.”

DISCUSSION: We center our caregiving on teaching others to feel safe with us, loved by us, loving toward us, and engaged with us. We realize that every move we make with our presence, touch, words, and eyes send messages to the person about who we are and who the person is. We assume that if we can touch the person's heart his behaviors will take care of themselves.

FREE RESPONSE: When an Individual is exhibiting a “behavior”, what is she really communicating?

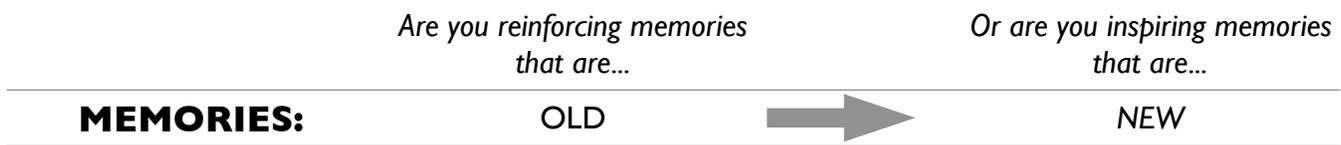


REFLECTION QUESTION: Do you account for the Individual’s preferences by being **flexible**?

DEFINITION: “how flexible we are about honoring the Individual’s needs over the assigned schedule and tasks.”

DISCUSSION: Each person is a thousand times more important than any schedule, assigned tasks, or normal ways of doing things. Be willing to bend the rules if necessary to prevent any form of violence. No matter what the scheduled event might be, make certain that the person feels safe and loved with you.

FREE RESPONSE: How might giving choices help you to be flexible?

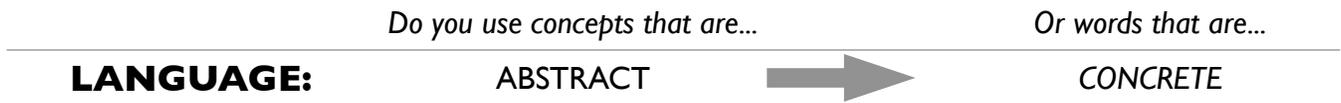


REFLECTION QUESTION: Does your interaction help build **new memories** for the Individual that companionship is good?

DEFINITION: “how well we create opportunities for the Individual to form inner feelings of self-worth to replace old feelings of worthlessness.”

DISCUSSION: Give the person a strong and vivid memory that it is safe to be with you. Repeated acts of unconditional love help to replace old memories of “You are worthless!” with new memories of “You are good because you are safe with me and loved by me.”

FREE RESPONSE: What can you do to help the Individual to focus on the present, instead of the past?



REFLECTION QUESTION: When communicating, do you give **concrete** explanations?

DEFINITION: “how well we communicate with clear and specific language.”

DISCUSSION: Make sure the person deeply understands your language. Never assume that words related to goodness, friendship, and community mean anything to the person who has never experienced these.

Use clear and concise words, instead of vague phrases. Don’t say, “We’ll go to the park later.” Instead say, “We’ll go to the park right after dinner.”

FREE RESPONSE: How might clear communication help the Individual to feel safe?