Validating Someone Else

Plan what you could say or do at each level. You do not need all six.
Validation is not agreement.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 The situation Who, what happened, what they said

Who and what happened: _____

What they seem to feel or think: _____

My first urge (fix it, argue, reassure, change the subject): _____

2 Six levels What I could say or do at each one

1. **Pay attention.** Phone down, eyes up. Listen to the whole story first.

   _____

2. **Reflect back.** Say what you heard, without judging, and check you got it.

   _____

3. **Read what is unsaid.** Gently guess a feeling or need. Be open to correction.

   _____

4. **Make sense through the past.** Given their history or body, it makes sense that...

   _____

5. **Make sense through the present.** Most people in this situation would feel...

   _____

6. **Be real, as an equal.** Respond as to a capable equal, not someone fragile.

   _____

3 Validate the valid Check before you speak

- [ ] I am calm enough to listen. If not, I will take a short break first.
- [ ] I am validating the feeling or the reason, not a harmful action.
- [ ] I will not add a quick "but" after it.
- [ ] I will ask: do you want me to listen, or to help you solve it?

4 Not the same as agreeing Both can be true

What makes sense (I can validate)	What I still disagree with or won't do
_____	_____
_____	_____

5 How it went Review afterward

What I said or did: _____

How they responded: _____

What I would try next time: _____

Thoughts of suicide or self harm? Call or text 988 (US) · In immediate danger: call 911

Original layout by Lotus & Tulip, based on DBT validation skills (Linehan, 1997, 2015). Not therapy.
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Self-Validation Practice

Your feelings can make sense even when you wish they were different.
Take yourself seriously, then choose what to do.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 What happened One specific moment

Situation: _____

Emotion and how strong (0 to 10): _____

2 Validate yourself Six steps

1. **Notice it.** I feel ... (name it, without "should" or "stupid")

   _____

2. **Catch the critic.** What I told myself about this feeling:

   _____

3. **My past or my body.** It makes sense because of my history or my state...

   _____

4. **Right now.** It makes sense because most people in this situation...

   _____

5. **Wise mind friend.** What a kind, honest friend would say to me:

   _____

6. **What I need now.** Taking myself seriously, my next step is:

   _____

3 When someone invalidated me Check the facts, then validate the valid

What they said or did: _____

Is any part of it accurate? _____

What is valid about my reaction: _____

What I will do (repair, ask, let go, soothe): _____

Practice log Emotion strength 0 to 10, before and after

Date	What my critic said	My validating response	Before	After

For the clinician

Based on Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 17 to 19 (Linehan, 2015) and Walking the Middle Path Handouts 8 to 11 (Rathus and Miller, 2015).

Model each level in session first. Levels are tools, not a script; one well placed level often does more than all six.

Validate the valid only: a feeling or reason can make sense while a harmful action still needs change.

Pair self-validation with check the facts when a client's reaction does not fit the situation.

Crisis: call or text 988 (US) · Text HOME to 741741 · Emergency: 911

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