



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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MOTIVATING FARMERS IN A TIME OF CHANGE

Building Confidence in Listening & Communication Skills

Listening for Strengths & Values Giving Affirmations



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AFFIRMATION

***Affirmations
are like salt...
too much will
spoil the pot.***

-Anonymous

Affirmations are statements of understanding and appreciation about a person's strengths and values and help build a "can do" attitude in the recipient. By recognizing an individual's successes and contributions, you help them build confidence in their ability to make a change.

To do this, tune into a person's strengths, efforts, values, or attributes and listen for evidence to provide back on how they demonstrate them. Use "you" statements to keep the focus on the person, always be positive, and match the level of seriousness and tone of the conversation.

Affirmations remind a person of their strengths and the resources they have available and help instill a belief that they can change.

Building Affirmations

Seek

Identify

Provide

Connect

Explore their perspective and experiences

Identify strengths, efforts, values, attributes

Provide evidence to support the statement

Connect the positives to change talk

Listening for Strengths & Values

Giving Affirmations

At each table, please have an individual volunteer share a success or accomplishment that has occurred professionally or personally (i.e. an award received, success working with a client, reaching an “ah-ha” moment, a child graduating from college, high school, or kindergarten, etc.). Have the individual explain the situation and what led it to be an accomplishment or success.

As the individual speaks, everyone else should be listening for values the individual represents through their story and record the evidence to support the chosen value.

Remember, an affirmation differs from a compliment. A compliment often has a component of judgement to it and usually begins with an “I” statement which focuses the value on the speaker rather than recipient.

Examples of affirmation statements:

- *“You used persistence to find new ways to accomplish what you needed .”*
- *“You showed a lot of strength in recognizing a change might be needed.”*

Identify one to three values you heard which represent the individual sharing their story, and provide the evidence for those values.

- **Value 1:** _____

⇒ Evidence:

- **Value 2:** _____

⇒ Evidence:

- **Value 3:** _____

⇒ Evidence:

“An affirmation opens the door. It’s a beginning point on the path to change.”

- Louise L Hay

Reference: Rosengren, D.B. (2017). *Building motivational interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook*, 2nd edition.

