



## Validation

### Behavioral Health Tips

Validation communicates to others an understanding that their feelings, thoughts, experiences, or perspectives are acceptable and understandable. Validation does not equal agreement. The idea is, you can express to someone that you understand where they are coming from, without having to agree with them. It involves the idea of honoring the other's perspective and experience. A goal of utilizing validation is to decrease emotional intensity, decrease conflict, and increase positive relationships.

#### How to Use Validation:

Utilizing validation with your child can demonstrate that you are listening, understanding, and being nonjudgmental of their experience or perspective. This skill can also be utilized to convey that disagreement does not have to lead to intense conflict. Additionally, validation can also be used to help your child learn how to practice self-validation for their own thoughts, feelings, and emotions. It is important to validate only what is valid, relevant to circumstance, justifiable, or appropriate. Avoid invalidation, which can communicate that what he or she is going through makes no sense.

For example,

If your child appears angry, you can validate the emotion without having to agree with a behavior that follows. "It makes sense that you are angry right now", "I understand you're having a hard time right now and I want to help you", "I know you are angry and we can get through this together". Validating the emotion can help deescalate the situation to avoid escalation of aggression or conflict.

If your child appears anxious, having a difficult time controlling worry thoughts, and refusing to attend school, you can validate the experience without necessarily agreeing with the behavior of refusing school. "Of course you are nervous, school can be very

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anxiety provoking", "anyone would be anxious when going through what you are", "It makes sense to be anxious right now and I know you can get through this". Utilizing validation, instead of invalidation "you have no reason to be anxious, just calm down, get over it".

If your child is having an urge to harm his or her self or expressing suicidal thoughts, you can validate their emotion and feeling without validating acting on the urge or thought. "I understand you're suffering", "You have the right to feel sad or stressed with what you are going through and I am here to help you", "It is okay that you are having these thoughts based on what you have been through, let's use some skills to get through it".



# Pediatric Behavioral Health



## **Additional Information:**

Rathus, J. H., & Miller, A. L. (2015). DBT®skills manual for adolescents. New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.