

FACE

Communicating with someone when their emotions are highly charged can be troublesome. We often find that our good intentions aren't actually heard. 'FACE FACTS' can be a useful prompt, when communicating at tricky times.

It can be powerful in times of chaos to remember that this is NOT YOUR crisis. Being there to validate, enable and support problem solving can help you both focus on this moment in time. This can help you both remain present whilst at the same time help reflect on obstacles that have been overcome before and that can be achieved again.



Watch Online!

F FEELINGS FIRST – GIVE A VERBAL HUG

The first step is to validate their feelings. Supporting them to name their emotions will help them hear that you are aware that they are struggling, you can also help them self-identify using phrases such as "It's understandable that you're upset because your friends are important to you". Often when we are upset, we crave time and space to be hugged. This is your opportunity to offer that hug, but using words instead of physically hugging, which may not be well received at this point in time.

"I don't always want to be touched but it's reassuring when someone shows they are listening to me."

PAUSE



A ASK PERMISSION TO DISCUSS OPTIONS

When we see someone in distress, our caring instinct often kicks in. We try to make things better for that person. This help may not be welcome at this point in time. Remember that the individual is in a heightened state of emotion and could possibly misinterpret your helpful intentions. This is the moment when you can ask permission to offer solutions that you can see; accepting that the answer may be no, at this point.

"It's good when someone says they can see I'm struggling, and suggests we can talk about it if I'd like to."

PAUSE



C CHOOSE VALIDATING LANGUAGE

If permission has been given, then now is a good time to check in on the language that you use. This has proven really useful! Using the suggested language preferences (see page 3), your good intentions are more likely to be heard.

PAUSE



E ENDING – CONCLUDE NOW/REVIEW LATER

When you have given your verbal hug and discussed options (if permitted), now is a good time to bring things to a close. You can summarise what you've discussed, any actions that you've agreed, validate and MOVE ON. When someone's emotions are running high, often once the moment passes, their mood can sometimes adjust and reset quickly. Accepting this abrupt change in emotions can be useful for keeping you grounded. When some time has passed you can revisit the 'crisis' point and see what went well for you both and what was difficult.

"It's good to talk about something else, taking the focus away from my crisis and come back to it later when I am calmer."



FACTS

F FEELINGS

During an altercation or a crisis, it can be useful to talk in feelings rather than facts. We can support their feelings - We cannot change the facts or why they feel this way.

"I don't always know why I feel this way."



A ACCEPT

It is important that we accept people are entitled to their feelings. We may not agree or understand why someone feels the way they do. However, those feelings are real to that person. Non-acceptance can feel to the person like they are being judged or criticised.

"Please don't tell me that you know how I feel or you understand what I'm going through. Even if you've had the same experience, my reactions and emotions are mine and may differ to yours."



C COMPASSION

Compassion is to feel their pain (empathy), to recognise and understand their pain (sympathy) and then to help alleviate their pain/suffering. As Parental Supporters we often find ourselves experiencing empathy and mirroring their distress, which can be unhelpful. With compassion you can be aware of their pain without being drawn into their suffering.

"If my Parental Supporter cries whilst I'm in crisis, then I carry their pain as well as my own and feel guilty. I do understand that my Parental Supporter feels sad, as a consequence of my experiences."



T TIME

The time we give during a crisis is most useful when it is focused time and it's OK for the time to have a boundary. This doesn't mean you should rush things, but it does mean it's OK to move on when you are both ready.

"It's helpful not to focus on my problem 24/7."



S SUPPORT

Being supportive and bringing calm is more likely to result in a positive outcome rather than 'fixing' things. The support will involve all the stages of FACE FACTS, which will bring about active listening and discussions with acceptance and compassion in a focused, timely manner.

"It's good to talk about something else, taking the focus away from my crisis and come back to it later when I am calmer."



Professional Approval from

D Starley, Educational Psychologist & E Green Mental Health Occupational Therapist

Quotes from

The Youth Participation Team Cornwall

FACE FACTS

F	FEELINGS FIRST - GIVE A VERBAL HUG	F	FEELINGS
A	ASK PERMISSION TO DISCUSS OPTIONS	A	ACCEPT
C	CHOOSE VALIDATING LANGUAGE	C	COMPASSION
E	ENDING - CONCLUDE NOW/ REVIEW LATER	T	TIME
	PAUSE	S	SUPPORT

VALIDATING LANGUAGE

	I	YOU
	I WONDER	YOU COULD
	I'M CURIOUS	YOU SHOULD
	I FEEL	YOU NEED TO
WHAT	WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE	WHAT DO YOU WANT
	HOW DOES THAT FEEL	I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL
	I CAN SEE YOU'RE UPSET	OH DON'T CRY
	I CAN SEE YOU'RE FRUSTRATED	YOU NEED TO CALM DOWN
	ECHO THEIR RESPONSE	DON'T BECOME A PARROT
	I CAN SEE YOU'RE TRYING	YOU NEVER
	YOU'VE MENTIONED BEFORE	YOU ALWAYS
	YOU CAN'T DO IT YET	YOU CAN'T DO IT

It can be powerful in times of chaos to remember that **this is NOT YOUR crisis**. Being there to validate, enable and support problem solving can help you both focus on this moment in time. This can help you both remain present whilst at the same time help reflect on obstacles that have been overcome before and can be overcome again. This will build resilience and a sense of moving forwards.



FACE FACTS

Professional Quotes

Elizabeth Green - Mental Health Occupational Therapist

This accessible resource is really helpful for parents and caregivers to read in preparation for crises, meltdowns, storms or whatever you call those times when the person you love and care for seems a stranger, hard to reach, pushing against you in their distress. You can equip yourself to engage, to reach out without being drawn in, to keep a healthy boundary in place, and this will really help your loved one. They will come to value your consistency, your compassion, your calm in their storm. It takes practice, of course it does but it is so worth the effort.

Dawn Starley - Education Psychologist

This is a helpful, accessible document with a clear framework for managing challenging situations based on theory, research and people's lived experiences. It provides hope for responding differently and feeling in greater control of your own response in the interaction; the best first step of meaningful change. This is a life-raft in stormy seas!

Vicky Hill- Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

This is an incredibly helpful resource for parents and caregivers to support their young people in managing distress. It gives a really useful structure in thinking about managing distress in the most helpful way, and has useful mnemonics that are essential to fall back on when panic and distress impacts on our own ability to think clearly. This resource is useful to support young people with a diverse range of mental health needs including depression, anxiety and emotional regulation difficulties.