Quick Reference for a Helpful Conversation

Guidelines for Support

**Supporting Others**
- Be present and accepting
- Be honest and compassionate
- Be curious and concise
- Listen closely
- Avoid lecturing them

**Getting Support**
- Describe what is troubling you
- Share how you feel
- Mention what would be helpful to you now
- Want advice, questions, resources?
- Ensure time for others to support you

Types of Helpful Support

**Helpful to:**
- Help the other person to express themselves, feel accepted and understood
- Continue to sincerely affirm and validate the other’s experiences and comments
- Help the other person to reflect and realistically act on their situation
- Focus on the other person’s perceptions, assumptions and conclusions

**Not Helpful to:**
- Focus on the past. Instead, focus on the present and future.
- Say "don’t feel that way" and "you feel that way because ...".
- Say "it'll all be better soon" and "others have it worse than you".
- Say "you should", "you have to", "you must", etc.

Sample Questions When Supporting Others

1. **To help them describe their current need**
   - How do you feel today?
   - What is bothering you the most?
   - Have you said everything that you want to say?
   - Is there a bottom line? If so, what is it?

2. **To help them clarify their situation**
   - How is this issue important to you?
   - Where are those strong feelings coming from?
   - Where do you feel stuck?
   - What have you tried so far?
   - Is what you’re doing resulting in what you want?
   - What do you think is the real cause of this?
   - Asking respectfully, do you have a role in cause?
   - What might you be doing that keeps things stuck?
   - What would you like us to ask you?

3. **To help empower them to act**
   - Have you experienced anything like this before?
   - What did you do? How did you work it out?
   - What do you hope for?
   - What’s preventing you from...?
   - What would you be willing to give up for that?
   - If you could change one thing, what would it be?
   - Imagine a point in the future where your priority is addressed. How did you get there?
   - What can you do before we talk again?
   - Do it by when? What will it look like when done?
   - How will you know that it’s done?

4. **To help them learn about themselves**
   - What insights have you had now?
   - How might you see your situation differently?