

Connecting with Others



Moorpark College Student Health Center

Contact Us



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ASK

For some it is easy, for others, it is challenging, but the first step to connecting with others is to ask questions.

Taking the initiative to ask questions is huge, even when it is small talk about the weather.

Starting Out



Keep it light!

- How is your day going so far?
- Do you have anything fun planned soon?
- How are you feeling about this class/work/project/etc.?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What is your favorite season?
- Have you watched anything good lately?

Going Deeper



- What would your dream job be?
- What would the theme song to your life be?
- What is something you've always wanted to do but haven't tried yet?
- What are you passionate about?
- What animal are you most like?
- Do you feel that you typically follow your heart or your head?

LISTEN



Don't just hear people, listen to them.

- **Pay attention**
 - Avoid looking at your phone, watch, etc.
 - Don't be thinking about something else, like what you are having for dinner.
- **Use appropriate body language**
 - Make eye contact if you are comfortable doing so.
 - Avoid looking bored or preoccupied.
- **Repeat key points/provide feedback/ask probing questions**
 - Summarize key elements to the story.
 - It sounds like X was very X.
 - Ask follow up questions to show engagement.
 - That must have been X. How does X now?
 - Provide feedback without judgement.
 - People are not always looking for an opinion or solution. Be mindful of not physically or verbally responding in a judgmental way.
- **Respond appropriately**
 - Appreciate someone's vulnerability and willingness to share.



Show Interest

Not everyone responds to social cues the same. It is important to embrace and recognize neurodiversity. Someone may not make eye contact or enjoy close interactions but may still be very present. Showing interest can be everything from engaging with a person through body language to nodding and responding appropriately.

General Tips

- Find points of commonality
- Avoid distractions
- Ask them to share more if appropriate/ask follow-up questions
- Be present
- Find something that does excite or interest you



Although connecting with people is important, it is okay to have boundaries. If you are uncomfortable, leave the conversation. If you do not have time, it is okay to express that.

Choose Language Carefully

Here are some tips on rephrasing language to be more supportive.

Reconsider	Try
You should do/think/feel...	How do you think/feel?
I had the same thing happen. I did...about it.	What do you think may work best for you?
I know what you need...	How can I best support you?
Well, it could be worse. You should be thankful.	That is really hard that you experienced that. It is normal to feel...
I totally get it.	I appreciate that you are willing to share that with me. Since you were brave enough to share, I thought you should know...



It is important to reflect on your feelings and reactions to a conversation. If you have a strong reaction, consider why. If a conversation evoked deep emotion, ask yourself why.

Avoid



Avoid controversial topics or politics starting out. Polarizing topics can be hard to discuss and create division in people.



Avoid always making it about you. Conversation should go back and forth. Don't always bring everything back to you or your stories.



Avoid interrupting or talking over someone. People want to feel they can fully express their idea; appreciate that they are sharing with you.

Do



Share your shine. It isn't gloating to share what is going well in your life or your accomplishments. Be mindful of not putting others down, but feel free to share the good things.



Share your insecurities and feelings. Sharing feelings and insecurities can help us bond with people.



Offer kindness. In the words of Brad Meltzerf, " Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always."