

VALIDATION VS. REASSURANCE

VALIDATION

Communicates: "Your feelings are real, understandable, and allowed."

Focuses on the person's current emotional experience

Doesn't try to fix, change, or dismiss feelings

Grounds the person in the *present moment*

Builds emotional trust

Example: "It makes sense that you're overwhelmed right now. This is a lot."

REASSURANCE

Communicates: "Things are okay, or will be okay."

Focuses on reducing worry or discomfort about the situation

Often tries to fix or soothe distress, sometimes prematurely

Often tries to project into a *future outcome*

Builds a sense of safety (when appropriate)

Example: "You've handled things like this before; you'll be okay."

VALIDATION VS. REASSURANCE: WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

Validation is soothing because it *meets the person where they are*. It says, “You’re not broken for feeling this way.”

When validation is skipped, the other person might not feel understood, only managed.

Reassurance is soothing because it *offers hope or safety*. It says, “There’s a path through this.”

When reassurance comes too soon, it can feel like dismissal. (e.g. “You’re fine!” when someone is crying)

If you want to validate but aren’t sure what to say, try one of these openers:

- “That makes sense...”
- “Of course you feel that way...”
- “I’m not here to fix it, just to listen...”
- “Tell me more about what you’re feeling right now.”

After reading through this, have you learned you tend to default to reassurance when your loved one needs validation?

You’re halfway there. Here are some rewrites:

“You’re going to be fine.”



““It’s totally okay to feel scared right now.”

“I wouldn’t worry about it.”



“It makes sense that you’re worried. This matters to you.”

“You’re overthinking it.”



“Your brain is doing a lot right now. I get why this feels heavy.”