

What responses are validating?

1. Your child comes in crying after having tried to start a homework assignment for the past 4 hours and not having been able to get past the first sentence. She moans: 'I've had enough, I'm just too stupid to do this'.
 - a. "I don't understand why you always get this stressed darling, you always get there eventually and get good grades, why don't you just start writing notes and see how you go"
 - b. "You're not stupid. Let's think about it together"
 - c. You know you often get stressed getting started – it always seems like the hardest part, eh?
 - d. "Well, you have lots on your plate at the moment with exams and you've been really hard and are probably tired, no wonder you've had enough"

2. When asking your child to get into the car to take her to hospital for an operation, she says she refuses to go, saying she 'can't be bothered'. You say:
 - a. "Don't worry, you are safe with me, it won't be as bad as you think"
 - b. "Is it feeling scary to go for this operation?"
 - c. "I know you don't feel like going, most people wouldn't"
 - d. "We don't have time to muck about, come on as we're running late"

3. After having had a big argument, and your daughter having sworn and snapped at you because you could not drop her at her friend's house, having made a prior plan, she apologises for snapping. You say:
 - a. Yes, I can imagine you are sorry after how you acted earlier.
 - b. "It's OK. I love you"
 - c. "Well – if you didn't swear and stick to the facts, then I wouldn't be so upset"
 - d. I know it's difficult that I can't always take you places like before, and that you get frustrated and lose your temper when you're late to things, however it's also not okay that you swear and speak to me like that.

Exercise 1: Invalidation

1. Young person complains she is fat and ugly

Young person: I just feel so enormous all the time and I hardly want to leave the house because I am so ugly

Friend: You aren't fat! Look at you, how can you say you are fat and ugly when you are so slim and attractive?



Why? What would be a more *validating* response?

Exercise 2: Invalidation

2. Young person expressing worry to teacher

Young person: I can't do anything right, I am stupid, so what's the point in even trying?

Teacher: Come on Reyanne – you cannot really feel like you are stupid – you always get good grades when you do manage to hand your work in.



Why? What would be a more *validating* response?

Scenario 1:

Following a really good few weeks your young person seems to be struggling at the moment and is feeling low. There doesn't appear to be an obvious trigger or reason why. You have noticed signs that anorexic behaviours have been around more.

What could you say that might be validating of their experience?

Scenario 2:

Your young person is having difficulties with managing their emotions following what appear to be a minor disagreement with their boyfriend/girlfriend. They are now very upset and crying.

What could you say that might be validating of their experience?