

I have always been told by my family and friends that I am an easy person to talk to. I myself struggle with anxiety and depression so I know how it feels to just want someone to talk to and to listen. For this reason, I am always open to be a listening ear for anyone who needs it. I have been told that I do better with face-to-face conversations than a conversation over the phone or through text. I think this is because I like to see people's facial expressions and body language to base the way I say and communicate things. I also feel like words and feelings can get misconstrued easily if you are not having a face-to-face conversation. I am personally not very good at giving advice. I tend to add my own way of coping with things into my advice and I have learned that this isn't the best thing to do because everyone copes differently; so, what works for me might not work for everyone else. My friends also tell me that sometimes by doing this, it makes the conversation more about me than the problem they are trying to communicate. So, I've been trying to work on a better way to have a therapeutic conversation. I communicate best just by listening and reassuring. I always try to keep good eye contact when talking and listening to people. I feel this shows the other person that I am truly listening and engaging in the conversation. I also tend to restate things that others are saying, not only to show I am listening, but also for myself to be sure I am understanding. I use a lot of reflecting when having conversations with others to truly see how they think they should handle things, rather than telling them how they should handle things. Like I said, my coping skills aren't going to work for everyone so I try to see what they think they should do and base my advice off of critiquing that. I feel as though my active listening skills are top tier. I always make direct eye contact, and even if I am not verbally participating in the conversation, I will always nod my head to know that I am still engaging and listening. I always try to avoid touching the other person during conversations. I personally do not like people touching me, so I never want to make anyone else feel uncomfortable when they are already trying to have an uncomfortable conversation as is. I feel like I give a lot of false reassurance during conversations to try and make the person feel better. This can ultimately hurt the person in the long run if I tell them what is happening is okay, and it's not. I also agree a lot when I am talking to my friends. I actually tend to agree with most of the things my friends say, even if I really don't agree. I also defend my friends when they are telling me about a disagreement they had with someone else. Even if my friends were not right in the disagreement, I always defend them because I feel like I should, after all they are my friend. I definitely need to work on that part of my communicating. I feel as though I am very aware of my listening and communicating skills, and my family and friends never fail to tell me how good my communication is or isn't. I can use this self-awareness to promote better therapeutic conversations by reflecting and fixing the things that need fixed. After reading the book, I have a better understanding of therapeutic and non-therapeutic conversations. Most of my communication techniques seem to be therapeutic, but now I know what to fix and eliminate from my communication. Like, agreeing, giving advice, or defending. I also now know what things to add to my conversation to make it more therapeutic, both verbally and non-verbally. For example, I could add broad openings to start a conversation with someone who seems down. I could also place events in time sequences to help myself better understand someone's problem and for them to have a better understanding of the situation as well. I could also encourage descriptions or comparisons to also have a better understanding of how someone else is feeling or perceiving things differently than I might be. Lastly, I could include focusing into my communication to really focus in on the thing that is bothering the person. There are a lot of things I can improve in my communication, but I do believe that I have a solid foundation to go

off of. I am excited to add these changes into my way of communicating and to see if it helps people feel more comfortable and open when having a conversation with me.