

SPEAKER-LISTENER TECHNIQUE

With the COVID-19 pandemic, there are added stressors in our daily lives and family relationships. Communication and connection are more important than ever, and as emotions can be heightened, effective communication is challenging. Set aside 10-15 minutes each day to check in about highs and lows. This practice can help you feel heard during this challenging time and lead to support.

- 1 Identify who will be the speaker and who will be the listener.
- 2 Speaker will share thoughts, feelings or concerns about an event or issue.
- 3 Speaker will briefly share and then say, "I'm finished" when he/she is done speaking.
- 4 Listener will repeat back what he/she heard, paraphrasing or using the speaker's language, "*What I heard you say was...*"
– Listener will not offer opinions or thoughts about what was said.
- 5 Listener will say, "Did I understand you correctly?" or "Did I get that right?"
- 6 Speaker may then correct the listener if necessary or indicate that he/she was understood or heard—repeat 1-5 until understood.
- 7 See if there is more information. Ask, "Is there anything more you would like to add?"
- 8 Repeat steps 1–7 until speaker feels heard/understood.
- 9 Listener may follow up with:
 - a. Validation: "Makes sense that...", "I can understand that..."
 - b. Clarifying questions — still not offering opinion or judgment: "Tell me more about how...", "Help me understand..."
 - c. Questions to show interest or curiosity: "Tell me more..."
 - d. After listening, may ask if speaker needs support or help problem solving
- 10 Switch roles

EMORY
HEALTHCARE

Veterans Program

[EMORYHEALTHCARE.ORG/VETERANS](https://emoryhealthcare.org/veterans)

888-514-5345