DBT VALIDATION GUIDE: A Practical Guide to Navigating Challenging Situations

What is Validation?

- ➤ **To confirm, to verify, to authenticate, to acknowledge**
- ➤ **Validation can be verbal or nonverbal**
- ➤ **Validation does not equal agreement**
  - o **Validating is a means of mirroring back to the person your understanding of why they feel as they do**
- ➤ **People in crisis have a strong need to be understood & will likely escalate if they feel misunderstood**
  - o **People don't usually share with you because they want your advice….they want your validation**
- ➤ **Validating someone can be one of the quickest ways to reduce emotional reactivity or avoidance**
  - o **Validate person without judgment or advice**
- ➤ **Invalidate the Invalid (*tricky so only do when you have good rapport and there is space for it*)**

LEVELS OF VALIDATION (*from easiest to difficult start w/easiest and move forward as you improve*)

- ➤ **Be Present** (*verbal and non-verbal cues*)
  - • Nodding, eye contact, facial expressions, "What then?", "Uh-huh", "I see", "Wow", "Yes" etc.
  - **Avoid over processing or lengthy "story telling"*
- ➤ **Reflection** (*matter of fact*)
  - • "So you are angry because your best friend didn't ask you to be the maid of honor". "Is that correct?"
  - **Note that there is no agreement, judgment or advice*)
- ➤ **"I Imagine" Question** (*what is being unsaid*)
  - • "I imagine not being invited might also make you feel humiliated and rejected?"
  - **Look for agreement or acknowledgement or lack of protest to ensure you are on the same page*
- ➤ **Connect the Past w/the Present** (*even when behavior is unhealthy*)
  - • "Since your friends have not acknowledged how important you are to them in the past, I can see why you got so upset with her"
  - **"Leave it here"…you don't have to try to "correct" the unhealthy behavior*
- ➤ **Encourage** (*communicate that their behavior is valid, meaningful, effective, reasonable etc.*)
  - • "It's not unusual to get angry when someone close to you hurts you"
  - • "Most people push away when they feel betrayed; it protects them from being hurt again"
  - • "Your anger let her know how hurt you were"
  - **You can "leave it here"; or ask how they feel about their response; or "Is there another way you would have handled it looking back?"*
  - ** Be careful not to push or ask too many questions here. "Leaving it here" is good enough*
- ➤ **Invalidate the Invalid** (*this is difficult and delicate-only do if you have practiced the above and rapport is good*)
  - • "I know you have been working hard on improving your relationship with her, so pushing her away or refusing to go to her wedding might cause more relationship problems for you. Are you open to exploring this?"
  - • "Even though I totally understand why you were so hurt, not going to the wedding will likely cause a lot of problems and additional hurdles for you if you still want to repair the relationship."
    - i. "Is there another way of dealing with this that doesn't cause you so many problems?"

  **Make sure you've validated, validated, & <u>VALIDATED THE VALID</u> before diving into this one