



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

T H R I V E

SUPPORTING FARMERS DURING CHALLENGING TIMES TO
TRANSITION | HOPE | RESPOND | INSPIRE | VALUATE | ENGAGE

image source: Unsplash

Making the Connection: Communicating with Distressed Farmers

“Feeling with” versus “Feeling for”: Empathy versus Sympathy

- **Empathy:** the awareness of feelings, needs, and concerns of others
 - Reach beyond your own experiences
 - Seek to understand from the other’s point of view
 - Listen actively and carefully
 - Validate the other’s perspective
 - Don’t take things personally
- **Sympathy:** the feeling of pity or sorrow at someone’s misfortune

Unconditional Positive Regard: the acceptance and support of a person regardless of what the person says or does. It is choosing to show genuine respect for the person as a human being and valuing them for going their best to move forward constructively. You are removing judgement from the situation and are addressing the problem, not the person.

Communicating with Patience & Respect:

- Focus on the issue at hand
- Listen without reacting or interrupting
- Recognize the feelings behind the words
- Respond with clarity and compassion
- Learn to tolerate the discomfort of frustration

Don’t let the
issues ruin the
relationship

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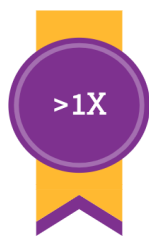
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Listening: The most fundamental component of communication

*“The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen.
Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.”*

Active Listening: Using EARS *Source: EARS Cheat Sheet by Sue Eck Maahs

- **Explore:** Ask for elaboration
- **Affirm:** Provide appreciation, encouragement
- **Reflect:** Listening versus hearing
- **Summarize:** Recognize the discussion and repeat key points



Roadblocks to EARS:

- Yielding to distraction
- Jumping to conclusions
- Interrupting
- Comparing
- Praising
- Overreacting
- Derailing
- Sympathizing
- Dreaming
- Preaching
- Advising
- Analyzing
- Mind-reading
- Judging
- Rehearsing
- Interrogating

*“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand.
They listen with the intent to reply.” – Stephen Covey*

Build a support system

*“Accentuate the Positive...
Eliminate the negative...
Latch on to the affirmative...
Spread joy up to the maximum...
Bring gloom down to the minimum...
Have faith or pandemonium liable to walk
upon the scene...”*

-Bing Crosby, Accentuate the Positive

- Check in regularly
- Don't spend the whole conversation on business
- Don't be afraid to ask how things are going
- Encourage them
- Provide or direct clients to appropriate resources
- Do not overcommit or promise what you cannot deliver
- Reaffirm the relationship
- Respond instead of react

