

“Help me understand...”

Rather than, *“Why did you...?”*, this phrase reframes the question as an attempt to reach understand and is less accusatory.

“The story I’m telling myself is...”

Sometimes we leap to conclusions about the motives behind a person’s actions, and attribute incorrect meanings to events. This phrase helps you express your perspective, while recognizing that there is another perspective to be learned.

“I think that would make me feel...”

This is great for active listening – it shows that you’re processing the other’s point of view, and also gives them a chance to state how the events made them feel.

“What I’m hoping for is...”

When having a challenging conversation, it can be useful to state your ideal outcome. This way, the other person can imagine what that outcome might mean to them, and can help you both reach a mutually acceptable resolution.

“What does support from me look like for you?”

This question is not “normal” or intuitive – but it can have a big impact on the other’s perception of your desire to support them. Different people need different kinds of support in different situations, and it’s helpful to ask rather than to assume.