

Basic rules for mutual emotional support

Ground Rules

- ✎ Find a comfortable and private space to talk
- ✎ Make yourselves comfortable, food or wine is fine to use to help relax
- ✎ Agree a timeframe - below are suggested times but you can choose what you like
- ✎ Stick to your agreed time frames and do not breach them
- ✎ Be sympathetic and offer support without criticism
- ✎ Try not to criticise
- ✎ Try not to be an “I-told-you-so”
- ✎ Try not to offer answers but offer time to reflect and discuss

Start

1. Toss a coin to see who goes first, the other person becomes the timekeeper for that session
2. First person spends 5 min just talking and downloading - any way you like
3. Second person listens attentively but says nothing
4. After 5min second person is allowed to ask questions of clarification only, no criticism, no problem solving, no advice, just sympathy and understanding
5. Second person talks for 5min and first person listens, as in 2 to 4 above
6. First person is then allowed to seek some assistance from second person to solve or explore one issue - no more than 10min
7. Second person engages, offers advice and support to help the first person to come to a decision for themselves
8. Second person is then to seek some assistance from second person to solve or explore one issue - no more than 10min, as in 6 & 7 above
9. Hard stop - no more discussion about work issues, its now time to talk about the weather, Netflix, etc.

Give this a go for a few sessions and then if you feel comfortable feel free to vary anyway you like. But remember the goal here is to allow people to process some negative emotions so don't criticise, offer lots of sympathy and understanding only!

