

The scenario cards for the person in distress:

Many of your personal possessions were destroyed in a fire. You are upset as you see it as a loss of reminders, good memories and experiences. You were upset that you weren't better prepared.

You had to evacuate your house quickly because of an emergency happening nearby. You couldn't find your cat before you left. You think she was scared and hiding somewhere, but you are worried and don't know what to do. You are unable to return home.

You have heard news of a major traffic accident in town. You know that your sister was planning to go that way, and she isn't answering her phone. You are very worried about her.

While at the shopping centre, you witnessed an attack. You were very scared and didn't know what to do. You feel shocked and worried about the people who were hurt and upset that you weren't able to help them.

Role cards:

Instructions for playing the role of the person supporting the distressed person

Your role is to provide emotional support to the person in distress. Here are some ideas:

- Ask what has happened, how they feel and what they need.
- Speak clearly. If they are distressed, they may not understand what you are saying at first. If they seem confused or unclear, keep what you say simple and remember that you might need to repeat yourself.
- Keep a comfortable distance – don't crowd them.
- Use a calm voice and show you are listening, such as nodding and saying words and sounds like "mmm".
- Make appropriate eye contact but don't stare.
- Listen with empathy by thinking about their point of view.
- Involve them in thinking about what options they have. Bear in mind that you may not be able to provide any solutions.

After you have had a conversation, the coach will give you some constructive feedback on other approaches or techniques you might use to support the person in distress.

Instructions for playing the role of the coach

During the role play, your role is to observe the conversation. Afterwards, feed back to the person in distress and the person supporting them.

- Ask them how they think the conversation went.
- Ask the person in distress how supported they felt.
- Ask the person supporting them how they felt in that position. Is there anything they would have done differently?
- What did the supportive person do that you think was helpful? Think about:
 - Their body language
 - The kinds of words they used
 - Their listening skills
 - Their use of non-verbal encouragement (words like “mmm” to show they’re listening)
- What do you think they could do differently next time?

Instructions for playing the role of the person in distress

During the conversation, think about:

- How might your character be feeling
- How might they express themselves
- What might their tone of voice be like
- What might their posture or body language be like
- What kinds of things they might say or want to express.

After the conversation, you might want to consider:

- If you felt supported during the conversation?
- Were there any other questions you would like to have been asked?
- Is there another way you would like to have been supported?