

RELATE

Relate: Help me know that you are with me, not against me.

One Question, Then Wait

Ask less. Listen longer.

WHAT IT IS

Adults often become uncomfortable with silence. We ask a question, wait two or three seconds, then ask another question, explain, suggest an answer, or start solving the problem. The student never really gets a chance to respond. Instead, choose one useful question and give it room.

The shift:

Make silence feel like space - not pressure.

ASK ONE QUESTION WORTH ANSWERING

Choose a low-pressure question that opens rather than corners: "What was the hardest part?" "What do you wish someone understood?" or "What do you need from me right now?" Avoid stacking several questions together.

LET THE SILENCE DO SOME WORK

Wait without staring the student down or making silence a contest. Sit at an angle, walk together, or let the student use a fidget or doodle. Five or ten seconds can feel long to an adult, but it may be the time a student needs to decide what they are willing to say.

"What do you wish somebody understood right now?"

Ask it once. Then let the student have the silence.

TRY THIS

CHOOSE

ask one simple, useful question.

STOP

resist adding another question right away.

WAIT

give the student real thinking time.

RECEIVE

listen to the answer before moving on.

KEY MOVE

Ask one question worth answering - and give the student enough room to answer it.

KEEP IN MIND

Silence should never become a power struggle. If the student is not ready to talk, respect that. You can say, "That is okay. We can sit for a minute," or return to another regulation or relationship strategy. The goal is to make room for voice, not force disclosure.