

Card 1

During a conversation, do you:

Dying Matters

- Sometimes find your mind wandering, or stay focused on what the other person is saying?
- Know how to show that you are listening?
- Encourage the other person to keep talking?
- Become aware of what is not being said?

Card 1

LISTENING ATTENTIVELY



This superpower is about understanding what others say. You avoid the temptation of listening to respond or judge, and when appropriate respond and reflect on what you have heard. There is attention to what is being said, and what is not being said.

How to enhance this superpower:

Challenge yourself to be conscious when your mind is drifting off. How will you be mindful of your thoughts and bring focus back to the person in front of you?

Consider how you will show your listening skills. For example, nodding, eye contact or verbal cues ("I see", "Mhmm"). This encourages the person to continue and is particularly helpful over phone or video.

Consider paraphrasing what you have heard. This is a great way to show you are listening. Try taking what you have heard and repeating it back to the other person. For example "What I'm hearing is..."

Card 2

During a conversation, do you:

Dying
Matters

- Find yourself being considerate of the other person's feelings?
- Feel awkward if it gets too 'deep', and end up talking about something else?
- Ever realise that you've said something inappropriate or insensitive?
- Find that you've made the conversation about you and your experience, rather than about them?

Card 2

RESPONDING MINDFULLY



This superpower can make the difference between a compassionate conversation and one that is not. Responding mindfully shows that we are considerate of the other person's feelings and not just saying the first thing we think. Responding mindfully supports bereaved people, and avoids unnecessarily causing people harm or offence.

How to enhance this superpower:

If the conversation moves away from the bereaved person, consider how you could respond to bring the conversation back to them. For example, "Have you experienced something similar or different?"

Naturally, we will make mistakes in conversations. If your response isn't appropriate, consider phrases you can say to show you're sorry. Take accountability by saying something like "I can see I've hurt your feelings saying that. I'm sorry. Thank you for your understanding, I'm still learning."

Sometimes responding with our own experiences can be helpful, but for others it may not be. Be mindful of the right time to make your contribution. You might say "Would it be helpful to hear my experience or are you just looking for someone to listen to you right now?"

Card 3

Dying
Matters

During a conversation, do you:

- Ever slightly zone out and miss details of what the other person is saying?
- Find it easy or difficult to interpret their mood or emotions?
- Get easily distracted by things like notifications on your phone?
- Feel comfortable or uncomfortable telling the other person what you're noticing about their emotions?

Card 3

BEING OBSERVANT



You pay attention and look out for signals. This is important because it assists you in understanding what people are saying and interpreting their moods and emotions that others may miss. Being observant can take some extra effort, but when done well is appreciated by all, and in this context it supports bereaved people.

How to enhance this superpower:

Noticing subtle emotions can be challenging. If in doubt, tell the other person what you have noticed to make sure it is reliable.

Next time you are in a work environment with many people, take time to notice the unique nuances and behaviours that you can spot. This can help you to notice such details in your compassionate conversations.

Being observant is easier without unnecessary distractions. Consider what you can do before your conversations begin to limit this such as silencing your phone or booking a private room.

Card 4

Dying
Matters

During a conversation, do you:

- Feel comfortable or uncomfortable when there is silence?
- Ever respond or talk without first considering your own thoughts properly?
- Make conversation unnecessarily when there is a lull?

Card 4

MANAGING SILENCE



This superpower is about giving space to the other person and encouraging them to explore their needs and feelings. It takes a great deal of patience and it reinforces the message that the focus of the conversation is on the bereaved person. It shows you respect the other person. It shows we are aware that feelings may be complicated and need time to reflect on or articulate. It allows the other to express feeling as they arise.

How to enhance this superpower:

Consider how you can support the bereaved person to feel comfortable in those quiet moments. Set silence up as an expectation by saying “Take your time, I can wait”, “If we sit for 20 seconds or 3 minutes in silence, it’s fine.”

Working with silence can be powerful and help you to better engage in a conversation with bereaved people. Consider how you can create space for silence in your own responses. You may want to say something like “Thank you for sharing. I’m going to take a moment to think about how I want to respond.”

Consider how you will know if silence is the right choice. What signs would you be looking for that to tell you the other person needs a moment? What signs would show that they are expecting a response?

Card 5

During a conversation, do you:

Dying
Matters

- Feel tired afterwards, if you've been discussing something 'heavy'?
- Ever feel uncomfortable when someone talks about their experiences or emotions?
- Understand how to set boundaries?
- Know how to process your own emotions after the conversation has finished?

Card 5

RESPECTING EMOTIONS



Bereavement can bring up lots of different emotions. All of us will react differently, even if experiencing a similar loss. These differences can make the process feel isolating, and we may worry that we are not grieving the 'correct' way. Respecting emotions means we don't try to change or tell others how to feel. We manage our own emotions in the conversation. We don't suppress how we are feeling, but rather pause them to give the other person space, time and respect. When we respect emotions we validate how the other person is feeling and make them feel less alone.

How to enhance this superpower:

Emotional conversations can be draining. Consider how you will look after yourself once the conversation is finished. How do you like processing your emotions? You might want to go for a walk or write down your feelings on paper.

A range of emotions may come up during your conversations. It's important to have a clear idea of boundaries and any limitations in the support you can offer. How will you know if further support or signposting is needed? What signs will you look for?

When we respect emotions we don't try to change or fix how people are feeling. However, we can support people to find coping strategies that work for them. How will we help the bereaved person to identify their support needs? Asking questions about their current support can be a good starting point.

During a conversation, do you:

- Find it easy to really understand where someone is coming from?
- Feel challenged or annoyed when the other person's world view is different to yours?
- Ever remember judging someone, either during or afterwards, for something they said?
- Know what your own biases are, and how to counteract them?

CONSIDERING PERSPECTIVES



This superpower is about attempting to see a situation from a point of view outside of our own. We are not trying to imagine ourselves as the other person but rather using what we have heard and seen in order to understand why they may be responding how they are. Bereavement affects us all differently and is often a result of our individual stories such as our upbringing, culture or personality. Considering perspectives means restraining judging others and being open minded instead. It shows you have flexibility of perspective.

How to enhance this superpower:

Expand your understanding of bereavement by reading case studies from different people of different backgrounds. Consider how their perspective may be shaped by their experiences.

Consider trying to understand a perspective you don't agree with from the other's point of view. What experiences would lead them to think that way? What differences or similarities can you notice with them?

Our own biases or expectations may arise when we engage in compassionate bereavement conversations. Consider some of the beliefs, norms or expectations you had during your own grief process, if applicable. This may help you to understand how your perspective is shaped by your unique experience.