Chapter 9 Outline

(I italicized and bolded words are key words)

I. The foundation of supporting others is empathizing.
   A. **Empathy** is the cognitive and affective process of perceiving the emotions others are feeling and then acting on our perceptions.
   B. There are two ways people empathize.
      1. **Perspective taking** is imagining yourself in the place of another person.
      2. **Empathic responsiveness** is experiencing an emotional response to another person’s actual or perceived display of emotions.

II. There are three guidelines to help increase the ability to empathize.
   A. Pay attention to nonverbal and paralanguage cues.
   B. Pay attention to the emotional content of the verbal message.
   C. Use the skill of perception checking.

III. To appropriately support another person, one must first empathize and then transition into effective supporting messages.
   A. **Social support** is the assistance we provide to others who we believe need our aid.
      1. **Supportive interactions** are conversations whose goals are to provide emotional support for a partner.
      2. Supportive interactions can be either relatively simple and brief or complex dialogues that take place over time.
         a. There are four phases of supportive interaction.
            1). Support activation is the first phase of supporting; it begins when something happens to trigger an initial supportive response.
            2). Support provision is when the comforters send messages that are designed to provide support by focusing on their emotions being displayed or the problem that has been expressed.
            3). In phase three, recipient reaction, the recipient will react to what the helper has said or done.
            4). The last phase, provider response, is the provider’s response to the recipient’s reaction.
   B. Support providers need to create a **supportive climate**, or a conversational environment in which recipients will feel comfortable disclosing their problems and emotions.
      1. Emphasize your desire and availability to help.
      2. Promise—and keep—confidentiality.
      3. Convey acceptance and affiliation.
      4. Convey warmth and caring nonverbally.
      5. Promote elaboration with questions and brief responses.
   C. The skill of validating emotions is essential to being an effective support provider.
      1. This skill has three elements: (1) acknowledging the negative emotion, (2) legitimating the experience of emotion, and (3) encouraging discussion of the emotion.
   D. Emotion theory helps to explain why ignoring or dismissing negative feelings does not cause them to go away, and why validating emotion is a more successful approach to comforting. It also suggests that an emotional reaction will change only if the person who is experiencing it begins to perceive the situation differently through **encouraging reappraisals**.
      1. **Appraisal theories of emotion** explain that what we feel arises from what we think.
a. The theory of conversationally induced reappraisals explains that when we have a conversation with someone who validates what we are feeling, there is relief that comes simply from having our emotions recognized and understood.

1). Examining those feelings can help us accept them, and begin to reappraise, or revise our perspective.

2). The skill of encouraging reappraisal offers information, observations, and opinions that help the support recipient reframe the situation so that he/she sees in a different light that is not associated with strong emotion.

a). Encouraging reappraisal is a useful support skill for any kind of emotional upset, but it is especially important when support recipients are dealing with lost self-esteem.

i. The cognitive-emotional theory of esteem support messages explains that support providers can help restore self-esteem and promote problem-solving by encouraging more positive reappraisals.

E. Advice is a recommendation about actions to take in response to a problem.

1. You can skillfully give advice by following these procedures: (1) ask for permission to give advice, (2) briefly describe any expertise relevant to the advice, (3) explain why you believe the advised action is effective and feasible, (4) address any limitations or drawbacks, and (5) phrase your recommendation as a suggestion.

F. Celebratory messages support positive feelings.

1. Capitalization is the process of sharing our successes and leveraging the good feelings that come from them by telling others with the expectation that they will celebrate with us.

2. Celebratory messages help others capitalize on their success.

IV. There are gender and cultural differences in offering support.

A. Both men and women of various ages place a high value on support from their partners in a variety of relationships.

B. For members of multiple cultural groups, support strategies that involve validating emotion and encouraging reappraisal are regarded as highly sensitive ways of providing support.

V. Using social media to offer empathy and support

A. Digital support creates a social distance that frees some people to disclose problems that they would be uncomfortable talking about in face-to-face contexts.

B. The number of individuals who participate in an online support group enhances opportunities to receive support from people who have experienced the same situation.

C. Individuals, who are apprehensive communicating in face-to-face settings, benefit greatly from receiving support through social media.

D. There is also an ease of management using these mediated forms of communication that allow us to more easily manage the sending of our messages.

E. Social media can also help us memorialize others.

1. Sending such a digital message through a Web site or social networking site is called transcorporeal communication, “trans” indicating beyond and “corporeal” indicating the physical, material body.