

Learning Activity - Normalizing Statements
<b>Short description</b>
<p>People may sometimes have difficulty sharing information about their health problem, particularly if they are anxious or embarrassed about it. One way of reassuring a patient (and creating a shame free environment) is to use statements that ‘normalize’ their problem, that they are not the only person to have the experience. This can be done by making a general, or a normalizing statement about the issue to take the focus off the patient momentarily. Beginning statements with phrases like:  <i>many people feel ..., some people tell me ..., often this is about ..., sometimes I have been told that ...</i> can provide a starting point to encourage the patient to talk honestly about a difficult topic.</p>
<b>Duration:</b> 15 minutes
<b>Learning goals</b>
<p>The student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands the function of normalizing statements.</li> <li>• formulates normalizing statements</li> </ul>
<b>Materials</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of conversation / roleplay diabetes</li> </ul>
<b>Instructions</b>
<p>Form small groups – 3 / 4 students and read the conversation.</p> <p>Assignment:  Recognize and underline the ‘normalizing statements’ that are being used?  Formulate two other examples of normalizing statements that could be used in this case.</p>
<b>Reflection</b>
<p><b>FEEDBACK:</b> The answer examples below (mc questions) are not the only possible normalizing statements for these scenarios. The important thing to convey is that the client is not the only person to experience this problem. Normalizing statements are useful to reassure the client and make them feel more comfortable talking about their issues.</p>

<b>Tips for supervisors</b>	
<p><b>Acknowledge</b> and <b>connect</b> to the experience of the client.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "How hard it must be for you to..., " or</li> <li>• "Many people have difficulty with the language used by physiotherapists and doctors."</li> </ul> <p><b>Multiple choice questions about Normalizing statements that can be used to assess the student.</b></p> <p><b>Question 1.</b> Mary has been stressed with work and has come to see the physiotherapist with complaints of pain in her neck and shoulder region. The PT says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>A lot of people experience stressful periods at work.</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Stress is something we all have to live with.</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Has this been going on for very long?</li> </ul> <p><b>Question 2.</b> Ghassan has come to see the physiotherapist because he has a lot of pain in his arm. The doctor says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> I can see that your arm is quite stiff.</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Do you have to lift a lot of heavy things for work?</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Having pain in your arm can make things difficult to manage.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Question 3.</b> The physiotherapist has given the client a home exercise program. The PT is concerned that the client does not do the exercises correctly. The PT says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Do you understand how to do the exercises?</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Lots of people find the instructions for exercises complicated.</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> So, I have given you some exercises that should help you.</li> </ul>	
<b>References</b>	<p>The text is translated from this clip (in Dutch).</p> <p><a href="#">Deel 2 Zelfmanagement en beperkte gezondheidsvaardigheden - in de spreekkamer - YouTube</a></p>



## Conversation with client with LHL about diabetes.

Assignment:

Recognize and underline the 'normalizing statements' that are used?

Formulate two other examples of normalizing statements that could be used in this case.

Conversation:

You are with me for the first time, what can I do for you?

Client: I do not know, the GP sent me.

Yes, the doctor has determined that you have a high risk of diabetes, you probably also received a leaflet with some information.

Client: I do not remember.

All people with a high risk of diabetes receive a leaflet to take home with them.

Client: Oh, oh that one.

Do you have that folder with you?

Client: No.

Did you manage to read the folder at home?

Client: Um...

Never mind, I have got a new one here.

Client: Uh yeah...

Most people find it difficult to read this leaflet, does your wife help you read this kind of thing?

Client: No, the guys do...

And filling out forms?

Client: My sons do this too, stupid huh?

No, it is good that you say this, then I can help you even better and I will not overload you with folders and all kinds of other things.

Client: That will be nice.

Fine, no problem. You went to see your GP last week, didn't you?

Client: Yes, ...



The doctor saw that you were on the heavy side and that your cholesterol was elevated in your blood, which increased the risk of getting diabetes.

Client: Is that bad?

Diabetes is a common condition, people who have diabetes also often have problems with their eyes or their heart or kidneys. But it can also clog the arteries.

Client: So that is pretty bad?

Yes, luckily you do not have diabetes yet, so it is now important that we work together to ensure that it does not come to that. What do you think?

Client: Um if I hear it that way then it seems better not to get. Would you mind if I explained a little more about that?

Client: If you would like to do that.

Yes. I will add something to that. How the body processes food. Look here the food enters the body, the pancreas makes insulin, insulin is the substance needed to get sugar into the cell. In overweight people, insulin no longer works properly. And that increases the risk of getting diabetes. Do you understand?

Client: Yes.

Just to be sure, can you tell me again what I just told you?

Client: Um, what I understand is that it has something to do with food, and some gland that is not working properly, and then I do not produce a chemical and then I could get diabetes.

Yes, very good, fine! The pancreas indeed. So, diabetes is very well preventable, in your case if you start exercising more or eat differently, eat healthier, you can prevent it a lot.

Client: But I am already moving a lot, I am carrying bags around all day, and I am jumping on and off that car, so plenty of exercise.

I understand that you say that you are already moving a lot. Extra exercise, in addition to everything you already do all day, this is very difficult for everyone, so that is right, but I'm going to help you with that. Is it an idea to start working with a notebook? You take the notebook home, you can have your questions noted in it, you can have drawings and pictures put in it and if you want to take it with you to our visit, we will talk about it. And I can also write down what we discussed so that you can check it there at home. Does that sound like something to you?

Client: Yes, that is good, then I might remember everything much better, those guys will probably want to help me, I believe that. Good! If we do, I just want to ask you to set a goal for the next visit. And so are more exercise or eat healthier.

Client: Phew! Yes...



It will take some getting used to, but I will help you with it.

Client: That's nice.

Then once you and your family have decided what you want to do, you can write it down and we can discuss it next time and then we will look further, ok?

Client: I think that will work. Okay, well, thank you.

