ELDERS AS SPIRITUAL GUIDES

• Transactional?
• Directive?
• Counselors?
• Presence?
Introduction to Story Listening

Based upon the research and teaching of Rev. Dr. John Savage in LISTENING AND CARING SKILLS
Three Essential Gifts We Bring

• Lived faith in God
• Willingness to be present
• Capacity to Listen without judgement

Better to stretch for understanding before rushing to judgement
What we do not bring . . .

• Judgement
• Solutions
• Acts of comfort that might cause confusion
Exercise

• Think of a time when someone made time to listen without judgement to you.

• What did the listener do to help you open up?
“You cannot not tell your story.”

We each have at all times a minimum of two stories within us that would benefit from a respectful hearing.
The Nature of our Stories

• Often below the level of consciousness
• Sometimes given to us or imprinted on us
Cite an example of an Aha story
Types of Stories We Hear

• Data Back Then
• Feelings Back Then
• Feelings Now
• Self-Disclosure/Aha!
DATA BACK THEN

• Data back then
  • “I remember when . . .”
  • Puts a distant context to the story I want to tell
  • Smallest level of vulnerability
  • First words may offer clues to the story to be revealed
FEELINGS BACK THEN

• May contain data nuanced with tone or use of feeling words
• “When I was in high school, I was often bored.”
FEELINGS NOW

• “I feel great!”
  • Tone is congruent with statement
  • Body language is consistent
SELF DISCLOSURE

• “I’m not sure what I believe anymore . . .”
• When the speaker's personal insight snaps to consciousness.
• Usually accompanied by laughter or tears
TYPES OF STORIES

- Reinvestment
- Rehearsal
- “I know someone who”
- Anniversary
- Transition
REINVESTMENT

Tell of shifting commitments and loyalties
REHEARSAL

Tell events from an earlier time in life (rehearse) to inform the listener of what is going on now
“I KNOW SOMEONE WHO . . .”

Projects one’s inner condition onto someone else
ANNIVERSARY

Rehearsal story told at a particular time of the year to deal with unfinished work from that event.
TRANSITION

Beginnings, endings, confusion
COUNTER STORY

• What goes on inside of you as you listen deeply
• Can provide clues
• Risk: stop listening to the other and attend to your story
WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE LISTENING

• Paraphrase
• Productive Questions
• Perception Check
• Expressing Feelings and Emotions
• Fogging
• Negative Feedback
• Behavior Description
PARAPHRASE

Saying back to the speaker what you heard in your own words
PRODUCTIVE QUESTIONS

• Asking questions based upon free information, deleted information, and answers to your previous questions
PERCEPTION CHECK

• Checking your perception of another’s emotional state
EXPRESSING FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Naming your own emotions
FOGGING

Naming the truth in another’s critical feedback
NEGATIVE INQUIRY

Coaching the other to criticize in specifics rather than generalities
DESCRIBING BEHAVIOR

Describing observed behavior without judgement