

Activity No. 2.1.

MODULE	Social and Communication Skills: Building Supportive Relationships for Informal Advisors
Topic	Managing emotional intensity and difficult conversations
Title of the Activity	Managing Difficult Conversations
Pedagogical Objective	The aim is to enable participants to develop skills in managing emotionally challenging parent interactions, use empathic communication, handle resistance, and apply strategies for building trust and supportive relationships.
Target Group	Informal advisors supporting parents of children with disabilities
Duration (minutes)	60 minutes
Setting	Classroom
Group Size	5–10 participants
Method	Scenario cards, flipchart/whiteboard, markers
Tools	Senaryo kartları, Flipchart / tahta, Kalemmler

Description of the Activity

In this activity, participants are expected to:

- Recognize and understand the emotional processes experienced by parents of children with disabilities and acknowledge their universality,
- Develop empathic awareness by relating to families with similar experiences,
- Identify and practice supportive communication skills within the role of an informal advisor,
- Enhance psychological resilience and emotional relief through sharing experiences and emotions

Participants are asked to identify the emotions experienced by parents in the given scenarios and to develop possible supportive statements in response. Group discussions are conducted, and shared emotions are written on the board to make them visible. The facilitator models empathic communication using phrases such as “I understand, this must be a very challenging process” (15 minutes).

Participants are then invited to view the parenting experience as a journey and express it using metaphors (e.g., difficult, uncertain, hopeful). During sharing, non-judgmental listening is emphasized, and each experience is acknowledged as personal and meaningful (15 minutes).

Participants are divided into “client” and “informal advisor” roles and engage in role-play activities. The facilitator actively participates by demonstrating empathic communication techniques. After the role-play, the following questions are discussed:

- Which expressions were most effective?
- What was challenging?
- Which emotions stood out? (15 minutes)

Participants conclude the activity by forming pairs and creating supportive statements they can use in real-life interactions with parents (15 minutes).

Summary – Self Reflection

1. How did I feel during difficult conversations?
2. Which communication approach was most effective?
3. How do I usually respond when I encounter resistance?
4. What strategy will I try in my next interaction?

Activity No. 2.2.

MODULE	Social and Communication Skills: Building Supportive Relationships for Informal Advisors
Topic	Active listening, empathy, and open communication
Title of the Activity	Am I Really Listening?
Pedagogical Objective	The aim is to enable participants to develop active listening, empathy, and non-judgmental communication skills; to better understand parents' emotions and needs; and to contribute to effective informal advisory practice.
Target Group	Informal advisors supporting parents of children with disabilities
Duration (minutes)	60 minutes
Setting	Classroom / group work environment
Group Size	5–10 participants
Method	Role-play, active listening exercises, group discussion, reflective feedback
Tools	Scenario cards, paired seating arrangement, note papers, whiteboard / flipchart

Description of the Activity

In this activity, participants are expected to:

- Recognize the support systems needed by parents of children with disabilities,
- Develop informal advisory skills in information sharing and referral processes,
- Distinguish between social, emotional, and institutional support resources,
- Increase awareness of accessing accurate and reliable sources of support

Participants are given different parent scenarios and are asked to identify appropriate support resources for each case. Discussions focus on guiding parents toward social support, emotional support, and institutional services. Group discussions are conducted to share appropriate referral strategies (20 minutes).

Participants then create a “support tree” on a large sheet of paper, writing different types of support on the branches (information sources, social support, services, emotional support). Each participant adds examples based on their own experience and shares them with the group. The facilitator emphasizes the importance of accessing reliable sources of support (20 minutes).

Participants work in small groups to discuss how they would guide a parent facing a specific problem. Each group presents its solution, and the facilitator provides feedback. Finally, reliable information sources and local services are summarized (20 minutes).

Summary – Self Reflection

- 1- What did I learn about support systems for families?
- 2- How will I guide parents more effectively in the future?
- 3- Which type of support (emotional, social, institutional) do I feel most confident in?
- 4- What is one action I can apply in my next advisory interaction?

Activity No. 2.3.

MODULE	Social and Communication Skills: Building Supportive Relationships for Informal Advisors
Topic	Developing active listening and empathic communication skills
Title of the Activity	Empathic Listening for Strong Communication
Pedagogical Objective	The aim is to enable participants to develop active listening, empathy, and reflective communication skills; to establish trust-based communication with parents; and to respond supportively by accurately understanding emotional expressions.
Target Group	Informal advisors supporting parents of children with disabilities
Duration (minutes)	60 minutes
Setting	Classroom
Group Size	5–10 participants
Method	Role-play, paired work, observation, group discussion
Tools	Role cards, circular seating arrangement, observation forms, whiteboard

Description of the Activity

In this activity, participants are expected to:

- Apply the core components of active listening (reflecting, clarifying, summarizing),
- Understand parents' emotions accurately through empathic communication,
- Develop non-judgmental listening and trust-building skills,
- Recognize non-verbal communication cues (tone of voice, facial expressions, body language)

Participants are paired. One plays the role of a parent, and the other plays the role of an informal advisor. The “parent” shares a concern about their child, while the “advisor” responds using active listening techniques. The facilitator models empathic responses and provides examples of reflective statements throughout the process (20 minutes).

Then, roles are switched and the activity is repeated. Participants observe and take notes on which expressions make them feel more understood and supported (20 minutes).

In the final stage, a group discussion is conducted. The following questions are addressed:

- How did I feel while listening?
- Which expressions increased trust?
- What was challenging? (10 minutes)

Participants conclude the activity by developing an empathic listening statement they can use in real-life situations (10 minutes).

Summary – Self Reflection

- 1- How did I feel during the active listening process?
- 2- Which communication technique was most effective?
- 3- What was the most challenging part of showing empathy?
- 4- What is one sentence I will use in real-life communication?