Sentence starters to speak with empathy

Empathy is a powerful tool that can help you better understand another person. Use these sentence starters to begin conversations with empathy.

1. **Gather information.**

   Make sure you know enough about the situation.
   - Would/could you tell me a little more?
   - Can you tell me what you need right now?
   - Is there anything else you’d like to share?
   - Would you like my help in figuring this out?

2. **Clarify understanding.**

   Reflect back what you think you’ve heard.
   - Let me see if I have this right....
   - I want to make sure I understand what you’re telling me.
   - What I’m hearing is....
   - What I hear you saying is.... Is that right?

3. **Model listening.**

   Show you’re listening and paying attention to body language.
   - It sounds to me like this might feel....
   - I can see that you are feeling [emotion]....
   - I can hear how [emotion] you are feeling.
   - Your face is telling me that....
   - I can hear in your voice that....

4. **Affirm feelings.**

   Acknowledge vulnerability and affirm that feelings aren’t right or wrong.
   - Thank you for sharing this with me.
   - I understand you feel that way.
   - That sounds like an [adjective] experience.
   - I hear you.
   - I’m not sure what to say right now, but I’m here to listen.