



# THOUGHTFUL LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS

## “YOU MUST...”

Remember when we use this type of language we can sometimes leave families feeling that they are not doing enough, or not doing things quickly enough, or are simply not good enough for their loved ones. This can lead to guilt, shame and negativity. So, a slight shift in HOW we communicate can make all of the difference.

## TRY THESE PHRASES

HERE ARE SOME KEY PHRASES YOU CAN CONSIDER TO ‘SOFTEN’ YOUR CONVERSATION.

Have you thought about (...)?

Have you heard about (...)?

Tell me more about (...)

Let’s think about what it would take to get to (...)

Did you know about the (...)?

Help me understand what’s stopping you from (...)

What do you think you need to get (...)?

Let’s think about this together. I know this can be overwhelming. I’ve been there. Let’s take this in little chunks. Let’s start at the beginning. Where shall we start?

## WHY IS “CAN” AN IMPORTANT WORD?

BECAUSE IT GIVES THE POWER TO THE LISTENER AT A TIME WHEN THEY FEEL POWERLESS.

Can I help you with the steps needed to get to (...)

Can I help you understand this process?

Can you tell me more about that?

Can we work through this process together?

There are some steps that need to be done in order to get to (...). Can I tell you about some of them?

There is a resource that might help you get what you need. Can I tell you a bit about it?

So be able to get to (...), the first step is (...). I can find someone who will help walk you through the process so you won’t be alone if you feel it is overwhelming.

## SHIFT AWAY FROM “HAVE TO”, “SHOULD”, “NEED TO” OR “MUST”

### TEAM APPROACH

GIVING A SENSE THAT YOU ARE ‘IN THIS TOGETHER’ IS IMPORTANT.

Walk together through this journey/process

How can we shift to the ‘how’ and away from the ‘no’?

What would involvement/collaboration look like in your family?

Let’s do this together

It’s important to us to hear your point of view

Who is on our team?

Pause to reflect throughout

It can sometimes be helpful to bring someone with you for support

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

What I am hearing you say is that you are feeling (...)

I sense that you’re feeling quite (...)

## EMPATHETIC RESPONSES

Do you think you’re feeling (...) because

When (...) happened, did you feel (...)?

It sounds like (...) was very (...) for you