

# How Not To Do Empathy

## Empathy involves:

- Making human contact
- Being fully present
- Being vulnerable

## Empathy does *not* involve:

- Trying to make the other person feel better
- Trying to fix the other person's problems
- Trying to understand intellectually

## How *not* to do empathy:

- Advising/Fixing: "I think you should . . ." "How come you didn't . . .?"
- Making it about you: "That's nothing; wait'll you hear what happened to me."
- Educating: "This could be the best thing that happened to you if you would just . . ."
- Consoling: "It wasn't your fault; you did the best you could."
- Story-telling: "That reminds me of the time . . ."
- Negating: "Cheer up. Don't feel so bad. Feeling sorry for yourself won't help."
- Sympathizing: "Oh, you poor thing . . ."
- Interrogating: "When did this begin?"
- Explaining/Defending: "I wanted to call but . . ."
- Correcting: "That's not what I said . . ."