

# Strategies for Supportive Conversations

## Key Elements of Support

### Body Language

- Maintain a calm demeanor.
- A tall, open posture communicates a willingness to listen.
- Keep a soft gaze and maintain eye contact if the student seems comfortable.
- Sit at an angle as opposed to across from the student.
- Nod to express understanding; remain neutral while the student is talking.

### Language

- As much as possible, listen without talking or reacting.
  - “Uh-huh”
- Express empathy.
  - “I hear you.”
  - “That must be really tough on you.”
  - “I’m sorry to hear about what you are going through.”
- Avoid using “you” statements. Rephrase those as “I” statements instead.
- Keep the tone of your voice calm no matter what the student says.