

Talking with people about delusions (from Amador, 2000; Nelson, 2005)

- I. Empathy- for the described experience
 - a. Whether “true” in fact or not, it is experienced as factual by the person.
 - b. *Try to see and feel the situation from their point of view.*
 - i. How would I like someone else to respond to me if this were true for me?

- II. Suspend disbelief and explore in a neutral, curious way
 - a. Do not directly challenge or agree with a delusion
 - b. Listen: Reflect what you hear without reacting or changing information.

 - c. Ask questions to better understand- “eye witness testimony type questions”
 - i. Help me understand... when did it start, how did you come to know this? Walk me thru a recent example step by step. Keep emotion low.
 - ii. How have you handled it?
 1. What has been helpful? What has not been helpful?
 - iii. IF client says: “Do you believe what I say is true?” delay with respect
 1. No reason to doubt you, but no way of knowing for certain. Can I gather more information before I answer that question?

- III. Small checks to see if thinking is flexible or if there might be some doubt
 - i. Indirectly floating ideas- have you ever wondered about (give an alternative idea)? Any chance something else may be happening?
 - ii. Was there ever a time you were not 100% sure about this?
 - iii. What does your family, friends, say about this? What do you make of that?

- IV. Other notes:
 - a. Maintain a calm demeanor and go slowly
 - b. Also check- When is the client at his/her best? Identify an *interest* or *strength* in the person’s life and ask them to tell you about it. Or, offer options for things that may be of interest.
 - i. “We are working on ____ here at the shelter, would you be interested in....”