



## **“VAR” Communication Tool**

### 1. VALIDATE their feelings and experience:

- Listen intently to what the person is saying. Do not focus on your defense or your own opinions.
- Look past the issue to identify and validate the specific feelings they are having in relation to the conflict or situation. Repeat these feelings back to them. This will help diffuse anger and bring comfort.

Examples: *“I can see how that situation would make you feel angry.”*  
*“I am sorry that was hurtful and I can see why you are upset. That would upset me too.”*

### 2. AFFIRM their value and endurance:

- Look past the situation to see how they are enduring and/or finding grace within the challenge.
- Give them reassurance of their value, their relationship to you and others, and even with God. This will help affirm emotional safety and counter feelings of rejection or neglect.
- Affirmation will reframe the situation and help them move their emotions in a more positive direction.

Examples: *“I am amazed how you have relied on God through this challenge & persevered. It says so much about you.”*  
*“I know this has been so challenging and I can see how you are courageously pursuing what you need.”*

### 3. RECONCILE by finding a helpful solution together:

- Reconciliation restores harmony in the relationship by resolving conflict and/or coming to an agreement about next steps
- Try to provide helpful suggestions that allow the individual to solve their own problem. You do not have to have the solution.
- They may counter with excuses. Listen, validate and affirm, and then help break down the excuse or situation into possible solutions or opportunities.

Examples: *“I know we don’t have all the answers right now and I will walk through this with you and discover the answers along the way.”*  
*“I know we need some space right now and I am committed to you and whatever process is best.”*