

## Connecting Communication Handout

Please remember that what will feel safe and empathetic to one person may not feel the same to another. Also, what feels natural to say varies from person to person. These statements are intended to spark your mind and heart on how to validate and connect with one another. The best way to have connected, healthy communication is to connect with your own story and pain first. Trust yourself and really be present as you listen to another, and your responses will be genuine and connected.

- When you told your story, I really connected with...
- I felt sad when you said...
- I felt angry about... (a particular part of someone's story of abuse)
- When you shared that, it helped me realize that what I experienced was abuse.
- What are you feeling right now?
- That should not have happened – children should be protected.
- You are sharing something sad, but you are smiling.
- What happened to you was abuse/abandonment/neglect.
- What do you need from the group right now?
- Feelings aren't right or wrong – they just are.
- I understand why you feel that way.
- Give yourself permission to be where you are at.
- I really connected to you when you shared...
- What I hear you saying is...
- I am so sorry/sad/sorrowful/heartbroken that happened to you.
- I understand why that would be hard for you.
- I wonder if that was difficult/painful/hard/sad for you?
- What was it like for you to share this part of your story?