



ABC's of Teaching *through* Connection

Inspired by Healing through Connection for Healthcare Professionals

Purpose: Create emotionally safe, person-centered learning and care environments where people feel seen, respected, and empowered.

A — Awareness: Notice Without Judgment

Core Idea: Before we teach, guide, or advise—*we observe with curiosity, not criticism.*

What This Looks Like

- Listen for the story behind the behavior
- Notice your internal reactions (bias, frustration, urgency)
- Separate the person from the condition or outcome

Replace Judgment With Curiosity

- Instead of: *"They're noncompliant."*
→ Say: **"What barriers might they be facing?"**
- Instead of: *"They don't care."*
→ Say: **"What matters most to them right now?"**

Quick Practice: Pause → Breathe → Ask: **"What might I be missing?"**

B — Belonging: Create Emotional Safety

Core Idea: People learn, heal, and change best when they feel safe—not judged.

How to Foster Belonging

- Use respectful, person-first language
- Normalize struggle and ambivalence
- Validate feelings before offering education
- Maintain warm tone, open posture, and eye contact

Helpful Phrases

- "You're not alone in this."
- "Many people experience this—let's figure it out together."

- “Thank you for being honest with me.”

Remember: Safety → Trust → Engagement → Learning → Change

C — Collaboration: Teach *With*, Not *To*

Core Idea: Education is most effective when it is shared, not delivered.

What Collaboration Looks Like

- Ask permission before giving advice
- Invite the person into decision-making
- Focus on realistic, meaningful next steps
- Honor autonomy and lived experience

Helpful Phrases

- “Would it be okay if we explore some options together?”
- “What feels most doable for you right now?”
- “What has worked—even a little—in the past?”

Micro-Action Framework: Listen → Validate → Partner → Support

When Judgment Creeps In (Because It Will)

Notice → Reset → Reconnect

Ask yourself:

- *Am I trying to fix or trying to understand?*
- *Is my tone creating safety or pressure?*
- *What does this person need most right now—information or connection?*

The Heart of Judgment-Free Education

When people feel respected, heard, and safe:

- Shame decreases
- Engagement increases
- Learning deepens
- Healing becomes possible—for both people involved

Connection is not an extra step in education. It is the foundation.

[Healing through Connection for Healthcare Professionals](#)

by Beverly Thomassian

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