

## Needs Assessment Through Relationship Building: Helping students and families to plan for college and career through employing the skill of empathic listening

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### KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- ✓ Empowered, engaged parents are partners in their student's success. By listening to families and incorporating their views and priorities in any strategies, we create a true partnership.
- ✓ Parents have aspirations for their children but at times, feel their ideas are not solicited. (Gale)
- ✓ The focus of this session is to equip providers with tools and practices to improve their empathic listening.

### FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION:

#### Resources on Empathic Listening

Covey, Stephen (1998). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (rev. ed.) New York, NY: Free Press.

Gale, Eileen. (2011). Is Anyone Listening to Families' Dreams? *Educational Leadership*, 68 (8) 32-36

#### Use of Music and A/V to develop empathy

Ohrt, J. H., Foster, J. M., Hutchinson, T. S., & Ieva, K. P. (2009). Using music videos to enhance empathy in counselors-in-training. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 4, 320-333.

Levy, Denise L. & Byrd, Daniel C. (2011). Why can't we be friends? Using music to teach social justice. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 11 (2) 64 -75.

#### Helpful Practices

- **Take care of the caretaker:** Providers who exercise self-care, balance, and self-empathy are best positioned to empathize with others.
- **Deep breaths:** Take at least 10 slow *deep* breaths (not shallow, chest breaths) before engaging in empathic listening to clear your mind, relax your body, and relieve your stress.
- **Don't make it about you:** While drawing on your own experiences may seem helpful in relating to others, empathic listening requires concentrating on fully being with the other person.
- **Empathic listening is *not*..:** Evaluating, probing, advising, or interpreting.
- **Watch the impact:** Pay attention to the effects of listening deeply to students and their families. You will likely increase the respect, understanding and mutual influence within the relationship.

