

# Building Empathy

Empathy involves listening to and understanding an employee's feelings. This quality is an essential building block in developing and maintaining good relationships.

## SkillBrief

Strategies for building empathy	
<i>Relating Experience</i>	By telling an employee about a situation you're familiar with and in which you experienced similar emotions, you show that your interaction is between equals and that you have some expertise in dealing with the issue. However, it's important to keep your story brief and your examples relevant.
<i>Reflecting Emotion</i>	Acknowledging the employee's bad feelings and the reasons behind them shows that you understand how the customer is feeling and why. Reflecting a person's emotions in this way conveys warmth and understanding, and it defuses tension.
<i>Normalizing Responses</i>	Let the employee know it's normal to have these problems and feelings. If an employee is self-critical, or makes negative statements about him or herself, it's important to offer reassurance and affirmation. However, avoid making the employee feel as though they are just like everyone else and avoid telling stories about other identifiable customers, as this shows a lack of respect and breaks confidentiality.

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