Coding Conversations for Person-centered Emotional Support

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**Manual for Coding Conversations for Person-centered Emotional Support[[1]](#footnote-1)**

The kinds of messages people produce when supporting others vary greatly. For instance, some people might say something like, “Geez, I’m so sorry to hear that, man! What a bummer.” Others may say, “Well, that doesn’t seem to be THAT bad. I’ve had worse experiences.” Clearly, there are differences in these two messages above and beyond form and intent. Messages vary along multiple dimensions. Some messages are long, whereas other messages are short; some are easy to understand, while others are less accessible. The examples used in the prior paragraph also illustrate that some messages might do a better job at helping another person cope more effectively with difficult emotions than other messages. Blaming someone or ignoring someone’s feelings is probably less helpful than expressing empathy for a person, even though the supporter may not have had the intention to be insensitive. Supportive messages contain a host of more and less helpful features, such as face-saving features, practical advice, or expressions of esteem. For this project, we will code listener utterances for what is called person centeredness.

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| ***Person centeredness* (PC) is defined as the extent to which the feelings and perspectives of the discloser are acknowledged, elaborated, and legitimized by the listener throughout a conversation.** |

In order to understand how person centeredness is predicted to work (i.e., we have no evidence at this point that supports our claims), we need to explain how the coping process “works.” Through research we know that people cope best with difficult emotions by reëvaluating what happened. This is called **cognitive reappraisal**. Reappraisal is an emotion-regulation strategy that “alters the trajectory of emotional responses by reformulating the meaning of a situation” (Goldin, McRae, & Gross, 2007, p. 577). We view emotions as resulting from *appraisals* of events that have personal meaning for us. Reappraisal works because the same event can generate different kinds of emotional responses depending on how we make sense of this event. For example, what was initially viewed as a frustrating conversation with a co-worker can be viewed as a challenging conversation that presents an opportunity to build a stronger relationship with the co-worker. Once a person changes his or her stance toward the event and looks at it from a different perspective, that different perspective generates different and more positive emotions. It is not necessary that the person adopts or “buys into” this new perspective; all that is needed is for the person to consider, contemplate, or visualize the *potentiality* of this perspective so that cognitive space is created where different emotions can emerge.

This reappraisal approach to coping implies four things: First, reappraisal is accomplished by the support recipient and may thus occur in the absence of support. Second, supportive conversations can facilitate reappraisals. Third, facilitating reappraisal is a discursive process that may happen over the course of one or many supportive conversation(s), rather than an isolated supportive message. Lastly, there are many conversational features that can foster reappraisals, and **person-centered messages in particular are predicted to assist support recipients in reappraising emotions by offering explanations, as well as different viewpoints and situational interpretations of the distressing event, resulting in more positive (and less negative) emotions.**



Historically, person centeredness has been measured with the nine-level person-centered hierarchy developed by Applegate (1980) and modified by Burleson (1982). The levels are often defined with prototypical messages illustrating the characteristics of each level (see Burleson & Samter, 1985, p. 114). We have reproduced the hierarchy above. *PC levels 7, 8, and 9 comprise high PC messages (HPC); whereas PC levels, 4, 5, and 6 are considered moderate PC messages (MPC) and PC levels 1, 2, and 3 are low PC messages (LPC).*

As you can see in the hierarchy, all messages contain multiple utterances. Messages at PC level 9 explicitly suggest new ways of thinking and feeling about the situation. But as the sample messages illustrates, there are many things that “go on” in a level 9 (PC9) message, and some of these statements are quite different from one another in meaning. For example, a statement, such as “I understand how frustrating it is to study for a test…” explicitly recognizes the other’s emotions in the context of what happened, whereas “maybe you know now how the teacher wants you to think…” attempts to offer a fresh perspective. As a whole, this sample messages makes up a PC9 message; the individual utterances of this message are likely dispersed throughout a conversation because people usually do not talk that long in one turn. For that reason, it is difficult to code utterances for PC.

We do not yet know whether a single PC9 message across multiple turns is necessary for a person to reappraise difficult emotions. In fact, we do not yet know how reappraisal is accomplished over the course of a conversation because conversations feature an array of utterances that vary in person centeredness. We do not yet know whether there are many different person-centered ways that lead to reappraisal. Regardless, facilitating reappraisal in talk ultimately is a process which may take a variety of conversational strategies. The point of our project is to find out what this process looks like and what these strategies are.

***Primary Actions/Goals of Messages varying in PC***Burleson (2003) identified four *primary actions* or *goals* that are accomplished with HPC messages in particular:

**1. Empathize with the discloser:** The listener connects and empathizes with the discloser.

1. Expressions of availability and desire to help (e.g., “I am here for you”).
2. Expressions of acceptance, compassion, regard, concern, worry, care, and interest for or about the discloser (e.g., “I worry about you,” “You are important to me”).

**2. Acknowledge that the listener follows the conversation:** The listener is paying attention and understands what is going on in the conversation.

1. Utterances that express an understanding of the situation (e.g., “I understand what you’re going through”) in a way that is genuine. Stating that one “totally understands” can easily be viewed as cursory and trivial.
2. Using backchannel vocalizations (e.g., “Mmhm”, “Uh huh.”).

**3. Validate the discloser’s feelings:** The listener legitimizes and validates the discloser’s feelings, thoughts, and actions.

1. Expressions that feelings are reasonable, appropriate, understandable (e.g., “Makes sense that you’re upset”).
2. Expressions of appreciation for the person’s situation (e.g., “This must have been tough”).
3. Expressions of absolution (e.g., “This was not under your control”).

**4. Encourage the discloser to elaborate on feelings:** The listener encourages the discloser to elaborate on his or her feelings and offers explanations of these feelings in the context of what happened to the discloser.

* 1. Encouragements to elaborate.

* + - * 1. Newsmarks are expressions that signal newsworthiness to the listener, as well as interest, involvement and curiosity, and prompt the discloser to continue talking about and elaborate on the event. Newsmarks include expressions of surprise (e.g., “Really?”, “No way!”, “My goodness!”) and partial repeats of prior statements (e.g., “She did?”), often with a pre-positioned “Oh” (e.g., “Oh really?” “Oh No!”, “Oh Yeah?”) (Nofsinger, 1991, p. 116).
        2. Asking clarifying question (e.g., “How did that make you feel?”).
        3. Encouragements to take time to talk (e.g., “Please continue”).

1. Paraphrases what the person may have felt or why people acted the way they did (e.g., “So are you saying you got mad at Ryan?”).
2. Suggesting a new way of viewing the event or suggesting a different course of action that is face-saving, reasonable, sensitive, and appropriate for the context (e.g., “Have you tried bringing him along to events?”).

**Be careful:** Telling the other how he or she *should* act or feel is not what is meant here. Offering potential new perspectives must be in the context of the upsetting event and must aim to help the discloser work through feelings in the context of the event.

1. Offering a hypothetical explanation of why things happened and what was felt (e.g., “Maybe he did not mean to upset you. Maybe he was just nervous when he asked you?”). Again, what is meant here is not to a diversion or minimization, but rather, offering a new perspective that could realistically explain the stressful event.

Most conversations revolve around MPC utterances, specifically PC5 and PC6 utterances, becauses these utterances tap content-level information about the stressor as well as ritualistic (or normative) expressions of sympathy (“I’m so sorry”). MPC messages thuis possess a wide range of primary action tendencies/goals. In addition, listeners may swing toward HPC utterances and return to MPC utterances (see Appendix 2). Similarly, listeners may utilize an LPC message and swing back to MPC utterances. It is unlikely (but not impossible) for a conversation to consist entirely of LPC and HPC utterances, or for a conversation to possess similar amounts of HPC and LPC utterances amidst MPC messages.

Of course, supportive messages can also express ***unhelpful actions*** and thus inhibit the discloser’s abiltiy to reappraise emotions in the context of what happened. Such statements are ***low person-centered*** (LPC) and include:

1. Evaluating, ignoring and/or judging (e.g., criticising) the discloser, his/her feelings, or other people connected to the event.
2. Talking about own feelings and experiences.
3. Offering directives how discloser should feel, think, or act.
4. Trying to distract attention away from the discloser’s feelings.
5. Finding the “silver lining in the clouds.”

**PERSON-CENTERED (PC) MESSAGE LEVELS**

We will code listener utterances for PC with a version of the nine-level hierarchy we presented earlier. The nine levels are organized into three major divisions:

* LPC features the three low person-centerered (LPC) message levels (PC1-3)
* MPC features the three moderate person-centerered (MPC) message levels (PC4-6)
* HPC features the three high person-centered (HPC) message levels (PC7-9)

The PC coding system thus differs ***quantitatively*** (i.e., how much PC does a conversation contain?) and **qualitatively** (i.e., what kind of PC does a conversation contain?).

* In terms of its ***quantity***, the nine PC levels operate on a ***continuum***; a PC4 utterance possesses more PC quality than a PC2 utterance. In other words, whatever action a PC6 messages aims to accomplish is theoretically viewed as being more beneficial to the discloser.
* In terms of its ***quality***, each of the major divisions (LPC, MPC, HPC) possesses a ***primary action tendency*** ***or goal*** that characterizes that major division. So for instance, LPC messages deny the discloser’s feelings. Each of the three PC message levels within that LPC division are further characterized by action tendencies that are thematically related to denying feelings.

Before we present the PC coding system, we point to ***two coding considerations***.

* + - 1. **We will code listener utterances only, because these utterances express support and thus person centeredness**. People who participated in our studies have been assigned the role of discloser talking about a recent upsetting event or listener responding to the discloser as he or she normally would. This does not mean that people maintain listener and disclosure roles throughout the conversation. In fact, the sample conversation we have been using throughout the manual illustrates how listener and discloser roles change (*see S001. unit 70*). In that case, listeners who begin drawing attention to their own experiences utilize low person-centered strategies.

The next point is vitally important for coding PC.

* + - 1. **Before you begin coding utterances for PC, please read the entire conversation first. Person centeredness is difficult to code. To capture the quality or level of a person-centered message, you must read the entire conversation first and pay attention to what was said before and after that comment.** People do not respond to individual components of messages. They respond to the *primary action* *or goal* the utterance tries to accomplish. It is crucial that you view utterances in the context of the entire conversation because an utterance might change in meaning when you consider the context within which it was said. For example, an utterance, such as “I know how you feel. I had a similar thing happen to me…,” might be an expression of sympathy (coded as PC5) or a diversion (coded as PC3) depending on what the listener says next. For example,
* **PC 5 = “Gosh, that just sucks…”**
* **PC 3 = “You see, the other day I went …” (*continues on for a number of utterances with an elaborate story that focuses on the listener’s problem*)**

Beginning the PC coding process by reading the entire conversation ***first*** is especially important for detecting statements that are high in PC (i.e., PC7-9).The nature of these high PC (HPC) message, more so than those with moderate levels of PC (MPC; PC4-6) or low levels of PC (LPC; PC1-3), highlights the very challenging nature of rating PC messages. As you can see in Table 2, PC9 messages are long. Highly person-centered (HPC) utterances often also happen across multiple listener turns because people, in general only talk for 1-2 seconds. That makes HPC messages easy to miss because utterances might not be highly person-centered when rated as stand-alone turns; but once you read the listener’s utterances in a “bundle” (i.e., across turns), the highly person-centered nature of the listener’s comment emerges. Appendix 2 features a highly person-centered conversation to illustrate what we mean.

Here are the three major divisions and nine PC levels. Technically, we have 10 levels if we count PC0.

**PC0 Action:**Utterances in this category feature comments that are unrelated or not part of the supportive conversation (e.g., comments made in small talk prior to begin of conversation).

**BE CAREFUL**! Just because the listener’s comment is about a topic other than the discloser’s stressor, that does not automatically make the listener’s comment a PC0. When the listener changes the topic by talking about personal experiences, these topic changes are coded as PC3 because they distract the discloser from the stress event. They should not be coded as PC0.

A PC0 comment is one where the listener and usually also the discloser engage in small talk for a prolonged portion of the conversation, and it is clear that the stressor has been dealt with or that both conversants have not yet begun talking about the stressor.

Below is an example (C90): The discloser (P) signals several times prior to utterance 95 that the stressor had been dealt with, and thus, beginning with utterance 100 the conversation between the discloser (P) and the listener (C) proceeds with chit-chat (numbers to the right indicate PC levels).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C | 1. Anything else distressing happened? | 7 |
| P | 1. P: Nope. |  |
| P | 1. It’s been a Pretty slow month, I guess. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Yeah) | 5 |
| P | 1. How about you? |  |
| C | 1. C: No, | 0 |
| C | 1. nothing really I think. | 0 |
| P | 1. P: Okay. |  |
| P | 1. So what are you going to do after you graduate? |  |
| C | 1. C: um I have no idea. | 0 |
| C | 1. Probably go back home | 0 |
| C | 1. and spend some time with my family probably. | 0 |
| P | 1. (P: mhm) |  |
| C | 1. and then maybe become a stock broker. | 0 |
| C | 1. I don’t know | 0 |
| P | 1. P: That sounds good. |  |
| C | 1. C: Yeah. | 0 |
| C | 1. How about yourself? | 0 |
| P | 1. P: Uh I think law school is after this. |  |
| C | 1. C: Oh really? | 0 |
| C | 1. You gotta be smart to do that. | 0 |
| P | 1. (P: Oh no) |  |
| C | 1. That’s awesome. | 0 |
| P | 1. (P: You just have to work hard enough) |  |
| C | 1. Yeah. | 0 |
| C | 1. Are you excited about it? | 0 |
| P | 1. P: mhm. |  |

**LPC: Low Person Centeredness (PC1-3)**

**PRIMARY ACTION/GOAL: The listener denies the discloser’s actions and feelings**LPC utterances include condemning, challenging, and minimizing the discloser’s feelings; ignoring or downplaying upsetting emotions; or outright blaming the other person for what happened.

It is important to remember that listeners do not harbor ill intentions when they use low person-centered comments. Keep in mind that we are imposing this PC system onto listener comments and that a lot of times listeners may be well-intentioned but unsure what to say. Supporting someone is hard, particularly if we do not know that person. Listeners might also simply not think carefully about what effect their comments have on others, may be tired, or may simply not be skilled.

**PC1 Action: The listener condemns the discloser’s feelings or blames the discloser**a) The listener denies, blames, or critizises the discloser.  
Examples:   
 “Well, you mighta brought this on yourself”  
 “Snap out of it, dude.”  
 “Man, you need to move on. What's done is done”  
 **PC2 Action: The listener challenges the discloser’s feelings**a) The listener states or implies that the discloser’s feelings are unwarranted, unfair, unreasonable, or not necessary.  
Examples:  
 “You should not be too upset about this.”  
 “I don’t see why you’re so upset!”

b) The listener states or implies that some of the discloser’s actions are responsible for the problem and how the discloser feels.  
Examples:   
 “It sounds to me that you did your share, too, though.”  
 “It sounds to me you’re not entirely faultless in this.”

c) The listener makes an evaluative claim that functions to deny the discloser’s feelings or implies that these feelings are somehow unwarranted or illegitimate.  
Examples:   
 “It wasn’t meant to be.”  
  
The difference between PC2s and PC3s are that PC2s intend to challenge, discount, question, or “test” the discloser’s feelings, whereas PC3s minimize, play down, or ignore the discloser’s emotions.

**PC3 Action: The listener ignores the discloser’s feelings**a) The listener provides a boilerplate reason, platitude, triviality, motto, or cliché that explains why things happened.  
Examples:  
 “Things happen for a reason.”  
 “Sometimes things just happen.”  
 “This, too, shall pass!”

If a listener’s utterance contains **spiritual content that refers to a higher power** (e.g., God, Allah, Nature), that does not necessarily mean that the listener is offering a platitude. Referring to a higher power might offer solace and thus be an effective coping mechanism for some situations and some people (e. g., impending death of a loved one with a terminal disease). If the listener’s utterance contains religious or spiritual content, use the religious PC scale developed by Wilkum and MacGeorge (2010)**.**

b) The listener tells the discloser how to think, act, or feel.  
Examples:  
 “You should be happy that you got rid of this douche.”  
 “You need to go and apologize.”  
c) The listener tells the discloser to forget about the situation or not worry about it.  
Examples:  
 “I would not worry too much, honestly.”   
 “Don’t worry about it.”

d) The listener ignores the discloser’s feelings or plays down their significance.   
Examples:   
 “It does not sound so bad to me.”  
 “What’s the problem?”

e) The listener denigrates the source (e.g., person or event) that caused or contributed to the discloser’s problem and stressful feelings with the goal of minimizing the discloser’s feelings.  
Examples:   
 “He probably did not mean to say it.”  
 “The professor sounds really stupid.”  
 “The committee probably did not know what they were doing anyway.”

PC3s Example e) utterances must have the primary action tendency of minimizing or downplaying the discloser’s feelings. In order to make this determination, please examine the context and read how the disloser responds?

If the discloser responds with genuine emotion statements, listener utterances could be paraphrases and should thus be rated as PC6.

f) The listener talks about personal experiences that are either only somewhat or not at all related to the discloser’s events.   
Examples:   
 “That happened to me…” (the listener continues with unrelated experience)  
  
PC3s Example f) might lead to a change in roles: The listener introduces and talks about an upsetting event and the discloser begins to offer support. An example of that can be seen in Appendix 1. Beginning with Utterance 70, the listener discusses her personal experiences for the remainder of the conversation and the discloser offers support.

***The discloser’s responses to the listener become now codable for PC.***  
All listener comments that are about the listener’s personal experience should be rated PC3 and not PC0, even if the remainder of the conversation is about the changed topic.   
  
If this occurs, please make a note of that in the transcript.

The listener might at some point revert back to the discloser’s stress topic.

**MPC: Moderate Person centeredness (PC4-6)**

**PRIMARY ACTION/GOAL: The listener offers a non-feeling centered, content-only comment to the discloser’s experiences; the listener expresses understanding of the situation.**MPC utterances include diversions, sympathy expressions, general acknowledgements that the listener is understanding what’s said, general references to boilerplate explanations why things might have happened, and requests for content clarifications. MPC utterances are polite, content-based, and nonfeeling-oriented.

**PC4 Action: The listener compensates for and diverts from the discloser’s experiences**

a) The listener attempts to distract the discloser with some kind of activity.  
Examples:   
 “Let’s go do something.”

b) The listener smoothes over what happened, points to the “silver lining in the clouds,” or to a rosier idealistic future, but does not stress how to get there or does not point out whether it’s realistically attainable.  
Examples:  
 “Maybe you guys will get back together.”   
 “It will probably all be ok in the end.”  
 “Everything will probably work out just fine.”  
 “Things like that usually work themselves out”  
 “Maybe in the future you will do XYZ again.”

c) The listener asks content questions that are only tangentially related to the upsetting event and distract the discloser away from the upsetting event.

**PC5 Action: The listener offers a nonspecific acknowledgment**The listener acknowledges the discloser’s feelings, but does not help the discloser understand and cope with these feelings.

a) The listener expresses regret, condolence, and/or sympathy.  
Examples:  
 “I’m so sorry”  
 “I’m bummed this happened to you.”  
 “I understand how you feel.”

b) The listener acknowledges/affirms the discloser’s interperations.  
Examples:  
 “That really sucks.”  
 “That’s horrible!”

PC5 a) and b) might be followed by a brief explanation or ***sympathy statement*** ***relevant to the context.***

An example can be seen in S001, Utterances 29-31:

29. it definitely sucks

30. ‘cause um I miss my mom

31. and she only lives like an hour away (inaudible).

The listener might also use disclosures, such as “That happened to me, too...” (see PC3). If “That happened to me, too..” is followed by ***brief listener experiences*** that are relevant to the context, as you can see above in 29-31, then these disclosures should be rated as PC5.

But if “That happened to me, too…” is followed by listener experiences that are unrelated to what the discloser is talking about and are quite extensive, then these listener utterances should be rated as PC3s.

Shared personal experiences can also be rated at major level 3 – for instance, the example PC8 message in the table on page 80 ends with “I’ve failed some tests before too …” but only after the discloser’s emotions are validated and legitimized.

In order to make the determination how much the listener shares his or her experiences, and hence whether these utterances should be rated as PC3s, PC5s, or higher you need to read the entire transcript.

If you have determined effectively that there is a role change, please make a note of that in the transcript.

d) The listener uses newsmarks that prompt continued talk about what happned.

Examples:  
 “Oh really?”  
 “No way!”

“OMG..she did?”

“What?”

e) The listener invites the discloser to talk using polite, boilerplate invitations.  
Examples:  
 “You can always come talk to me”

“I’m here for you!”

f) The listener offers some kind of general reassurance.   
Example:   
 “I will be here for you to talk and all.”  
 “I love you and will always be here for you!”

g) The listener uses backchanneling cues to signal understanding.  
Examples: “Uh huh”, “Mmhm”

**PC6 Action: The listener offers nonfeeling-centered explanations relevant to the discloser’s experiences**a) The listener offers a content-based only explanation for what happened.   
Examples:  
 “Man, that test was so hard though, wasn’t it?”

b) The listener paraphrases content-based, factual issues about the situation.  
 Example:

“Are you saying she was not in town?”

If the listener paraphrases the discloser’s feelings, that moves the utterance to an HPC level.

c) The listener asks clarifying questions to obtain more information about what happened.  
Examples:

“And what did he say then?”

PC 6 questions tap ***content-only*** (e.g., “And then what happened?”) questions that aim to clarify what happened***.***

References to the discloser’s feelings move the utterance to an HPC level. Questions that capture discloser’s feelings are rated as PC7 (discussed below).  
  
Questions that address an unrelated topic that is not about the discloser’s upsetting event are rated as PC4s because these questions act as diversions.

Example:  
“I’m curious..have you actually ever gone to the Niagara Falls?”

Questions that challenge the discloser’s feelings, actions, or perspectives should be rated as PC2. Below is an example of how PC6 and PC2 utterances can co-occur in the same conversation. The example is from the confederate dyad corpus (C95) about a discloser (P) who wants to go on spring break, yet faces resistance from his dad, because the discloser accummulated two moving violations and did not tell his father. The listener (C) is asking a clarifying question that is rated as PC6 (Utterance 30). However, the listener continues with questions that challenge the discloser’s comments (Utterances 30, 32, 35, 37, 41):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| P | 1. So I had the option to say “you know..” To just tell him, you know “I’m nineteen. I can do what I want.” |  |
| C | 1. I mean- | 0 |
| C | 1. you had the option to what? | 6 |
| C | 1. C: And you didn’t? | 2 |
| P | 1. P: No |  |
| C | 1. C: But he is paying? | 2 |
| P | 1. P: He is paying for the car, |  |
| P | 1. yeah. |  |
| C | 1. C: Couldn’t he just cut that off? | 2 |
| P | 1. P: If I went to Mexico? |  |
| C | 1. C: well, just any time he wants? | 2 |
| P | 1. P: If he wanted, |  |
| P | 1. yeah, |  |
| P | 1. he could. |  |
| C | 1. C: So he is kind of got control anyway? | 2 |

**It is important that you read the entire conversation to understand the context of the conversation.**

d) The listener ***gives factual advice*** on what actions the discloser might want to take to ameliorate or fix the problem by suggesting a method for repairing the situation *without* addressing, referring to, or mentionining the discloser’s feelings (i.e., focus on content/facts of discloser’s events only).   
Example:  
 “Have you tried hanging out together?”

If the listener is explicitly recognizing the discloser’s feelings in an empathic, legitimizing, and contextually relevant way while giving advice, the utterance is rated as a PC 8.

**HPC: High Person Centeredness (PC7-9)**

**PRIMARY ACTION/GOAL: The listener explicitly recognizes the discloser’s emotion and elaborates on the discloser’s unique experiences.**   
HPC utterances include statements that the discloser’s expressed feelings are legitimate and valid, The listener attempts to elaborate on what happened, attempts to explain what happened, or offers a different perspective of what happened and what the discloser feels. These utterances can often only be understood in the context of the discloser’s events, because the listener is directly commenting on what the discloser feels and has experienced.

**HPC utterances:**

* ***require*** that the listener refers to the discloser’s ***thoughts and/or emotions.***
* may happen across ***multiple utterances***. Properly capturing an HPC utterance means that you have to read the entire conversation first. Even though a stand-alone utterance may be, say a PC 6, you may find that a sequence of listener utterances is, in fact a PC9 (see Appendix 2) or a PC 8 (see example below).
* are ***idiosyncratic*** to the discloser’s situation (the discloser needs to know what the listener’s situation is all about in order to suggest a new perspective that’s genuine and realistic.
* are likely to ***not occur at the beginning of a conversation*** (particularly one among strangers and if it’s an event that has not been discussed in the past).

To reiterate (because it’s so important!), HPC utterances must be carefully examined within the context of the entire conversation. On the face of it, you may rate a stand-alone utterance as a PC6, but that utterance is in fact embedded in a string of utterances that taken together are a PC9 message. In other words, unlike MPC and LPC messages, HPC messages are usually longer (see Table 2 for message hierarchy) and are executed over a number of listener utterances because people don’t tend to talk for more than several seconds and are “tag off comments” with one another (which is why we call it a dialogue, not a monologue). That makes it challenging to detect and rate HPC messages. For that reason, it is important that you read the entire conversation first to get a sense of its emotional tone.

**PC7 Action: The listener explicitly acknowledges and validates the discloser’s feelings but offers only truncated explanations.**a) The listener asks clarifying questions about the discloser’s emotions.  
Example:  
 “So how does that make you feel?”  
 “Are you handling this ok?”

b) The listener explicitly validates the discloser’s feelings and offers assurance and comfort.  
Examples:  
 “Makes sense that you were upset.”  
 “I can imagine how upset you must be.”  
 “I am so bummed that you feel so down and sad.”  
 “You seem to be handling it ok.”  
  
c) The listener infers the discloser’s emotional state or general state of mind or uses a perception check. In other words, the listener helps the discloser find the feeling word that describes what the listener is feeling (the listener may reject the feeling).  
Example:  
 “ It sounds like you are frustrated he did not call.”  
 “Do you feel that they are bitter towards you for?”  
 “Don’t you hate that when they give you a guilt trip.”   
 “So do you feel more like bad about it or do you feel like angry at your parents?”

**PC8 Action: The listener offers an elaborated explanation for the discloser’s feelings and contextualizes the discloser’s feelings.**a) The listener offers an elaborated explanation for the discloser’s feelings. These explanations can be in the form of a question or a perception check (the listener articulates what she/he understood the discloser just said and are phrased as a question so that the discloser can revise), may include a causal word (i.e. because), and occur over a series of utterances.  
Examples:  
 “You’re probably angry because you did not study so hard, right?”  
 “So, when you say you’re upset, is it that you’re actually angry at Ryan or more frustrated at yourself?” (this is an example of a perception check)

b) The listener elaborates on the discloser’s feelings by contextualizing feelings (i.e., puts feelings back into the context of the discloser’s situation. Below is an extended example (see utterance 53-64, C85; P = discloser, C = listener).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| P | 1. P: Um it’s getting a little nerve wrecking cause |  |
| P | 1. I mean |  |
| P | 1. I’ll be nervous for that. |  |
| P | 1. Um but it’s just kind of finding a job, |  |
| P | 1. being rejected |  |
| P | 1. I don’t know |  |
| C | 1. (C: It’s stressful) | 8 |
| C | 1. C: Oh my god. | 8 |
| C | 1. The feeling of being rejected is so scary too. | 8 |
| C | 1. Isn’t it? | 8 |
| P | 1. (P: Yeah) |  |
| C | 1. Just people saying well thank you but (inaudible) | 8 |
| P | 1. P: Yeah. |  |

c) The listener elaborates on the discloser’s feelings by encouraging the discloser to be self compassionate which includes an appeal to common humanity (Neff, 2011), and/or to empathize with others involved in the situation.  
Example:  
 “I’d be pissed, too, but maybe it helps to know that you’re human and that we sometimes just go through crap.”

**PC9 Action: The listener offers a different perspective or interpretation of the event that the discloser has not yet talked about, and that helps the discloser understand and change his or her feelings.**a) The listener suggest different views, ideas, or thoughts the discloser could potentially take away from the event. The listener’s suggested perspective needs to be directly related to or emerge from the discloser’s event (otherwise it’s PC4).  
Example:   
 “I totally get you’re frustrated AND then think about how much more you know now about Terry that you did not know before, right?”

b) The listener offers some course of action in the context of having already acknowledged the discloser’s feelings.  
 Examples:  
 “I know you’re upset but remember that you usually do really well and that what happened is totally fixable if you get your butt in gear. What do you think?”

**Decision Matrix for Rating Person-centered Utterances  
(see also Figure 1 and Table 1)**

Please use the following steps to rate listener utterances for PC:

1. Begin by reading the entire conversation at least once. Become sensitive to how both listener and discloser orient themselves to one another.
2. Decide the major category for the utterance first. Ask yourself what the primary action for the utterance is. Make sure to consider the utterance in the context of the conversation.
3. Once you have decided for the major category, you have effectively narrowed down your choices to three PC categories. Read examples within each of the three categories and settle for one level that best fits the utterance in the PC column.
4. If there is a role change, make sure you rate the discloser’s supportive utterances in addition to the listener utterances! Check S001 for an example of how to do that.

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Table 1  
*PC Crib Sheet*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LPC (low person-centered)**  **PRIMARY ACTIONS: Denying & challenging thoughts and feelings.** | **MPC (moderate person-centered)**  **PRIMARY ACTIONS: Nonfeeling-centered (content only) referencing of discloser’s experiences; communicating understanding.** | **HPC**  **(high person-centered)**  **PRIMARY ACTIONS: Recognizing and elaborating of thoughts and feelings.** |
| **PC1: CONDEMNING denying, blaming, critiquing GET OVER IT** | **PC4: DIVERTING/COMPENSATING/ADVISING distracting, compensation, smoothing over, silver lining, reassurances, invoking boilerplate stuff IT’ll BE OK LET’S GO SHOPPING THINGS WILL BE BETTER THIS WAS MEANT TO HAPPEN** | **PC7: RECOGNITION clarifying emotion questions, validating emotions, offering comfort SO YOU MUST HAVE FELT REALLY SAD, RIGHT? I CAN IMAGINE HOW SAD YOU WERE** |
| **PC2: CHALLENGING feelings are unwaranted/ unreasonable; d. is responsible YOU HAVE NO REASON TO BE SAD** | **5: SYMPATHYZING condolence, regret, achknowledges/affirms actions (no emotion statements), newsmarks, invitation to talk/take time, reassurances, backchannels, shares relevant similar experiences (albeit brief) I’M SO SORRY OH NO!/SHE DID? UH HUH TAKE YOUR TIME I WOULD BE SAD,TOO! THIS SUCKS! I’M HERE FOR YOU. THIS HAPPENED TO ME (relevant to disclosure)** | **PC8: ELABORATION recognizing emotion and explaining it MAYBE YOUFRUSTRATED BECAUSE HE SAID THAT TO YOU WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT LAST WEEK-END.** |
| **PC3: IGNORING Evaluating/juding, directives how one needs to feel/act, talking about own experiences THINGS HAPPEN FOR A REASON I WOULD NO WORRY THIS DOES NOT SOUND SO BAD IT’S THE OTHER PERSON’S FAULTTHIS HAPPENED TO ME (irrelevant to disclosure; might lead to role change)** | **PC6: ACKNOWLEDGING clarifying questions for content only, nonfeeling-centered explanation, paraphrasing what happened WHAT HAPPENED THEN? THAT TEST WAS SO HARD TO DO THOUGH.** | **PC9: REFRAMING offering a different perspective and positive aspects that can be learned I KNOW THIS MADE YOU ANGRY BUT IMAGINE HOW MUCH MORE YOU NOW KNOW ABOUT X** |

*Figure 2.* Decision tree for coding conversational utterances for person centeredness. Proper coding of PC requires an initial read of the entire conversations to get a sense of the nature and context of the conversation.

Listener explicitly talks about feelings and perspectives

Yes

LPC: Denies feelings & perspectives

PC1: Condemns & Blames

“You might have brought this on yourself”

PC2: Challenges

“I don’t see why you’re so upset”

PC3: Ignores

“This, too, shall pass!”

HPC: Validates feelings & perspectives

PC7: Acknowledges & validates

You must have been so upset”

PC8: Explains

“You’re probably angry because you did not study hard enough.”

PC9: Reframes “I get you’re frustrated AND think about how much more you now know”

No

MPC: Content-only talk

PC4: Compensates & Diverts attention

“Let’s go out”

“Everything will be ok”

PC5: Expresses condolence

“I am so sorry this happened”

PC6: Content-only explanations & queries “What happened then?”

**Appendix 1  
Example Transcript of A Natural (Non-Manipulated) Conversation  
(Dyad 001 from LSU Data; S001)**

L= Discloser, R = Listener   
Coder note: There’s a role change beginning with 70.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Utterance** | **PC** |
| R | 1. R: We can start |  |
| L | 1. L: ok | 0 |
| L | 1. well…um, well my mom had picked me up a few days ago to go to the doctor in Lafayette |  |
| L | 1. because that’s where I live. |  |
| R | 1. (R: mhm) | 5 |
| L | 1. And like every time so the next time, every time like she brings me back I get this attitude the next day she brought me back, |  |
| L | 1. the next day she brought me back |  |
| L | 1. where I’m like aggravated because I like I don’t like staying here, |  |
| L | 1. I live in an apartment |  |
| L | 1. and it’s boring |  |
| L | 1. and I have like two brothers at home, |  |
| L | 1. so like I like get it like all homesick so |  |
| L | 1. I mean |  |
| R | 1. R: mhm | 5 |
| L | 1. L: and I get aggravated when she leaves right that second. |  |
| L | 1. When she leaves its just like I feel like I’m aggravated with everybody |  |
| L | 1. like I don’t bother – I don’t bother with anybody |  |
| L | 1. and I usually don’t talk to anybody after that day |  |
| R | 1. R: yeah | 5 |
| L | 1. L: …so I mean |  |
| L | 1. I try to cope with it |  |
| L | 1. but like, I usually call my sisters so I can have somebody to talk to |  |
| R | 1. R: mhm | 5 |
| L | 1. L: but sometimes I still feel like that it never fails when I go home when I come back here to Baton Rouge |  |
| L | 1. I mean |  |
| R | 1. R: yeah | 5 |
| L | 1. And, I mean… |  |
| R | 1. R: yeah | 5 |
| R | 1. it definitely sucks | 5 |
| R | 1. cause um I miss my mom | 5 |
| R | 1. and she only lives like an hour away (inaudible). | 5 |
| L | 1. L:I know |  |
| L | 1. that’s how long it is too. |  |
| L | 1. Its just… |  |
| R | 1. R: It’s just hard, | 5 |
| R | 1. it sucks. | 5 |
| R | 1. I know. | 5 |
| R | 1. I’m really close to my mom | 5 |
| L | 1. L: Yeah |  |
| L | 1. so like its really quiet at my apartment, |  |
| L | 1. so it doesn’t even feel like home at all. |  |
| L | 1. Its just like an apartment to me. |  |
| L | 1. It’s just |  |
| R | 1. R: Do you live by yourself? | 6 |
| L | 1. L: Uh I have three roommates |  |
| R | 1. R: mmhmm | 5 |
| R | 1. I mean |  |
| R | 1. its random roommates. |  |
| R | 1. R: mhm | 5 |
| L | 1. So I mean |  |
| L | 1. I didn’t know them, |  |
| L | 1. I just got to know them. |  |
| L | 1. but I’d rather be home. |  |
| L | 1. I hate that feeling like |  |
| L | 1. I try to deal with it, |  |
| L | 1. but every time I go home it starts all over again. |  |
| R | 1. R: Oh that’s miserable. | 5 |
| L | 1. L: I know…. |  |
| L | 1. well that’s it |  |
| L | 1. other than that… |  |
| R | 1. R: Yeah | 5 |
| R | 1. I would I would be miserable. | 5 |
| R | 1. I I get miserable whenever I’m away from my mom and stuff, | 5 |
| R | 1. it’s hard, | 5 |
| R | 1. it sucks and | 5 |
| L | 1. L: it does. |  |
| L | 1. That’s about it. |  |
| L | 1. But…I don’t know what else to do. |  |
| R | 1. R: Yeah… | 5 |

**Beginning with 70 there’s a role change. You will only catch this role change once you have read through the entire transcript. Once you determine that the listener talks about his/her experience and the discloser offers support, locate that place in the transcript where that shift begins.**

**Once you have effectively determined that a) the discloser is offering some person-centered support and b) the listener is disclosing some upsetting event or situation, please**

1. **code the discloser’s supportive comments for level of PC.**
2. **code the listener’s comments as you would IF this role change had not occurred and the listener would still be in the role of the listener (but now talking about his/her experiences).**

**Below you see that we have**

* **coded the discloser’s comments.**
* **coded the listener’s comments. Most are PC3s because the listener completely switches to talking about her experiences.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| R | 1. I uh, I like don’t really have that many friends either, | 3 |
| R | 1. because I have a boyfriend | 3 |
| R | 1. and I hang out with him like 24/7 | 3 |
| L | 1. L: mhm | 5 |
| R | 1. R: and then like whenever he goes home to see his parents, so whenever he goes home I like sit at my apartment | 3 |
| R | 1. because he’s from Tampa | 3 |
| R | 1. he goes to XXX | 3 |
| L | 1. L: mhm | 5 |
| R | 1. R: but he’s from Tampa | 3 |
| R | 1. and like I get really depressed then because I feel like I don’t have any friends. | 3 |
| R | 1. You know? | 0 |
| R | 1. Like ‘cuz I spend 24/7 with him | 3 |
| L | 1. L: I used to have that feeling, just secluded from everybody else | 6 |
| R | 1. R: it’s like | 0 |
| R | 1. and like the thing is, is like that I try, like I start - I’m trying - to start like trying to hang out with people and stuff | 3 |
| R | 1. you know? | 0 |
| L | 1. L: mhm | 5 |
| R | 1. Like get out there more even when he’s in town or whatever. | 3 |
| R | 1. you know | 0 |
| R | 1. I like try to hang out with more people, | 3 |
| R | 1. but like between studying and trying to keep my straight A’s, and then like hanging out with him | 3 |
| R | 1. you know | 0 |
| L | 1. L: yeah | 5 |
| L | 1. mhm | 5 |
| R | 1. R: I mean, | 0 |

**In 95-98 the listener attempts to sympathize again with the discloser again.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| R | 1. I definitely know the feeling, | 5 |
| R | 1. cuz it definitely sucks whenever you don’t, | 5 |
| R | 1. I don’t know – | 0 |
| R | 1. it’s hard. | 5 |
| L | 1. L: Yeah, | 5 |
| L | 1. It’s like… | 0 |

**101 is PC3 again because the listener is resuming talk about her situation with her boyfriend, which has nothing to do with the discloser’s mom/homesickness.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| R | 1. R: ‘Cuz no one – everyone’s used to you - me hanging out with him or something, | 3 |
| R | 1. you know. | 0 |

**In 103-6 the discloser addresses some of the listener’s feeling (ie., being comfortable) and also offers an explanation. Revisit utterances where the listener states that it sucks (96) and it’s hard (98). In 105 the discloser is trying to capture what is hard and what sucks by suggesting that the listener try to hang out with people she feels more comfortable with. This seems reasonable, if what sucks is the fact that the discloser does not know anyone.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| L | 1. L: Um, just Get out more, | 9 |
| L | 1. I mean, | 0 |
| L | 1. find the people that you’re more comfortable with | 9 |
| L | 1. Did you find any friends to…? | 6 |
| R | 1. R: Yeah, | 3 |
| R | 1. like…I try to hang out with other people, | 3 |
| R | 1. but they have their own thing. | 3 |
| R | 1. You know? | 0 |
| R | 1. And like they don’t really invite me to stuff anymore because like, they’re used to me being like oh, I’m working, I’m hanging out with Ryan and stuff. | 3 |
| R | 1. you know | 0 |
| L | 1. L: Oh, you say that? | 6 |
| R | 1. R: I mean | 0 |
| R | 1. I used to, | 0 |
| R | 1. but not anymore, now like…. | 3 |
| R | 1. You know? | 0 |
| R | 1. Hey I want to hang out what are you doing this weekend and stuff, or, you know what are you doing this week. | 3 |
| R | 1. You know | 0 |
| L | 1. L: yeah | 5 |
| R | 1. R: And then they’re like oh, I’m doing this, or something, | 3 |
| R | 1. and I’m like OK, cool, well I’m going to hang out with Ryan.. | 3 |
| R | 1. R: You know, uh, | 0 |
| R | 1. I don’t want to be like “Can I come” | 3 |
| R | 1. but I mean | 0 |
| R | 1. I’m trying to show it | 3 |
| L | 1. L: Do they see it? | 6 |
| L | 1. or are they just think you’re just…? (inaudible) | 6 |
| R | 1. R: I don’t really know. | 0 |
| R | 1. I don’t know. | 0 |
| L | 1. L: have you ever tried like, hanging out all together? | 4 |
| L | 1. Like you, whenever your boyfriend comes down, and like hanging out with your friends at the same time? | 4 |
| L | 1. Have you ever tried that? | 4 |
| R | 1. R: Yeah | 5 |
| R | 1. but like, yeah, | 0 |
| R | 1. they just – | 0 |
| R | 1. I don’t know | 0 |
| R | 1. I think that they think I don’t want to hang out with just them, | 3 |
| R | 1. that maybe they just associate me with Ryan. | 3 |
| L | 1. L: It gets tense, | 6 |
| L | 1. like you’re trying to please everybody at the same time. | 6 |
| R | 1. R: Yeah | 0 |
| L | 1. L: I know how that’s going. | 5 |

**141-144 are examples of utterances where the discloser briefly shares her experiences.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| L | 1. Right now, I’m doing stuff. | 5 |
| L | 1. It’s different. | 5 |
| L | 1. But it’s fun. | 5 |

**In 145-146 the listener does not respond to the discloser’s experiences (e.g., by asking “What kinda stuff you doin’?”), but continues talking about her situation.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| R | 1. R: it’s even harder, [whenever you like]….. | 0 |
| R | 1. Ryan and I have been together for over three years. | 3 |
| R | 1. But like, um, It’s - I don’t know. | 0 |
| L | 1. L: Three years? | 5 |
| R | 1. R: Yeah | 0 |
| L | 1. L: Oh my god. | 5 |
| L | 1. Ya’ll are about to get married. | 4 |
| R | 1. R: yeah, right | 0 |
| R | 1. we’d kill each other if we had to like, get married. | 3 |
| L | 1. L: inaudible | 0 |
| R | 1. R: Like, I’ve always told him I want my own apartment, | 3 |
| R | 1. you know to like? | 0 |
| L | 1. L: You do? | 5 |
| R | 1. R: Yeah, | 0 |
| R | 1. I have my own apartment, | 3 |
| R | 1. I don’t want to like live together or anything. | 3 |
| L | 1. L: That’s cool. | 5 |
| L | 1. But I mean | 0 |
| L | 1. it would be weird to see the person every day. | 5 |
| R | 1. R: Yeah. | 0 |
| R | 1. Like (inaudible) | 0 |
| L | 1. L: I’d get aggravated with them. If I had to see them every day. | 5 |
| L | 1. But you know…. | 0 |
| L | 1. hang out with your friends every once (R: inaudible) and a while. | 4 |
| L | 1. Everyone needs friends, I guess. | 4 |
| R | 1. R: Yeah I’ve tried. | 0 |
| R | 1. But everyone just associates me with Ryan | 3 |
| R | 1. so like, it’s annoying. | 3 |
| L | 1. L: Do they like Ryan? | 6 |
| R | 1. R: No… | 0 |
| L | 1. L: inaudible | 0 |
| R | 1. R: that might be a problem | 3 |
| L | 1. L: well what’s wrong with him? | 6 |
| L | 1. Does he have an attitude? | 6 |

*-Door knock ends the session-*

**Appendix 2   
Example Transcript of a Manipulated Highly Person-centered Conversation (Dyad from ASU Data; C135)**

**The listener begins by acquiring information about the event and what the discloser is feeling (4 through 21).**

C = Listener, P = Discloser

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Utterance** | **PC** |
| P | 1. P: Alright |  |
| P | 1. My -I picked a topic that I um wrote down was- |  |
| P | 1. do you have a boyfriend? |  |
| C | 1. (C: Ok) | 5 |
| C | 1. C: Yeah. | 5 |
| P | 1. P: Alright, |  |
| P | 1. you do. |  |
| C | 1. C: Mhm | 5 |
| P | 1. P:I I just started dating my boyfriend, |  |
| C | 1. C: Ok | 5 |
| P | 1. P: and I’ve just been with him like so much that I haven’t seen any of my friends for like a month. |  |
| C | 1. C: Mhm | 5 |
| P | 1. P: And so like when I do hang out with them, it’s kind of awkward because they are they like doing their thing like (inaudible) |  |
| P | 1. and I’m just with my boyfriend (inaudible). |  |
| C | 1. C: So because you’re a freshmen | 6 |
| C | 1. right? | 6 |
| C | 1. so a lot- are a lot of your friends like newer friends that you just made this year? | 6 |
| P | 1. P: Yeah. |  |
| P | 1. Mhm |  |
| P | 1. Yeah |  |
| C | 1. C: So you haven’t quite like cemented everything really? | 6 |
| P | 1. P: Right, |  |
| P | 1. so it kind of sucks. |  |
| P | 1. It does. |  |

**In 25 C is asking a crucial question about how P’s friends feel toward P. This question provides important information for both C and P, even though C’s emotion label does not quite capture what P thinks P’s friends are feeling. The point is that C’s question is getting P to think about what’s going on.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C | 1. C: Do you (P: (inaudible) Do you feel- Uh I was saying like do you feel like that they are like bitter towards you for? | 7 |
| P | 1. (P: Do I feel do I feel what?) |  |
| P | 1. P: They’re not bitter. |  |
| P | 1. Well, they’re not bitter, |  |
| P | 1. but like it’s like it’s like I sleep over like the past month |  |
| P | 1. like I haven’t slept at home. |  |
| P | 1. Like I live in Somora |  |
| P | 1. and I haven’t slept home. |  |
| P | 1. I hardly see my friends. |  |
| P | 1. Like they call me their ghost sister now because I’m like never there. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| P | 1. And like I went out to Sake with them like last weekend, |  |
| P | 1. and I was just like sitting there |  |
| P | 1. and all of them were just talking. |  |
| P | 1. And like I was just sitting there. |  |
| P | 1. no one’s like talking to me, |  |
| P | 1. and I had nothing to talk to them about. |  |
| P | 1. and I was just like I’m going to leave. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| P | 1. I’m going to go to Chad’s and you can drop me off there. |  |
| P | 1. I know it kind of sucked. |  |
| P | 1. But I don’t know. |  |
| P | 1. I don’t know what to do about it. |  |
| P | 1. I don’t know |  |
| P | 1. I don’t know |  |

**C is asking an important question in 50; she actually asks a very similar question in 184. Notice the differences in P’s response in 51 and 185. These differences suggest that P has begun to reflect on the importance the friends she is talking about here play and will play in her life.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C | 1. C: Do you want to keep hanging out with your friends? | 6 |
| P | 1. P: I I do |  |
| P | 1. . I do |  |
| P | 1. but it’s like they’re kind of bitchy. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| P | 1. Like they’re just uh - |  |
| P | 1. you know what I mean? |  |
| P | 1. Like you know when you’re a freshmen |  |
| P | 1. and you make friends. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Yeah) | 5 |

**Ps question to C and C’s response helps to strike a bond between both.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| P | 1. But do you have the same friends as you had when you were a freshmen? |  |
| C | 1. C: No, | 5 |
| C | 1. because I transferred schools. | 5 |
| C | 1. I mean | 0 |
| C | 1. I still have those friends but not like down here. | 5 |
| C | 1. Like I don’t hang out with them. | 5 |
| P | 1. P: Oh really? |  |
| C | 1. C: Yeah | 5 |
| P | 1. P: I don’t know |  |
| P | 1. they’re just not my kind of friends. |  |
| P | 1. They’re just kind of bitchy. |  |
| C | 1. C: Are they like your roommates and stuff in the dorms? | 6 |
| P | 1. P: Ohh. |  |
| P | 1. Well I can’t stand my roommate. |  |
| P | 1. My roomate li- I hate my roommate, |  |
| P | 1. but my roommate lives- my roomate is friends with my friends. |  |
| P | 1. I mean |  |
| P | 1. do you know what I mean? |  |
| C | 1. C: Right. | 5 |
| P | 1. Yeah, |  |
| P | 1. like in the same circle type thing. |  |
| P | 1. P: Yeah. |  |
| C | 1. C: Ok | 5 |
| P | 1. P: So it sucks, |  |
| P | 1. but I don’t know. |  |
| P | 1. And then like when I come home she’ll always be like oh you’re home. |  |
| C | 1. C: Mhm. | 5 |

**In 87, C has now enough information to understand the emotional “lay of the land” and is able to capture the emotional experiences of P. In that context, C is now expressing P’s experience in 91 and 92. This segment is a turning point in the conversation because C can now assist P in reframing her emotional responses to the actions of her friends toward her.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C | 1. Don’t you hate that when they give you a guilt trip. | 8 |
| P | 1. P: Yeah. |  |
| P | 1. Yeah. |  |
| P | 1. Come on. |  |
| C | 1. C: it used to happen to me when I was like a freshmen and sophomore with a boyfriend too. | 8 |
| C | 1. and I know it’s annoying because you’re like cut me some slack here. | 8 |
| P | 1. P: I know. |  |
| P | 1. shut up, if you had- |  |
| P | 1. you know what I’m saying? Like |  |
| C | 1. C: Yeah | 5 |
| P | 1. P: it’s just so annoying. |  |
| P | 1. And like I don’t know what to do about it now |  |
| P | 1. like I want to go hang out with them, |  |
| P | 1. but it’s just awkward. |  |
| C | 1. C: How do you feel about your boyfriend? | 7 |
| P | 1. P:And see that’s the other thing like like if I’m just being a girl right now or what. |  |
| P | 1. but like no, seriously I don’t know if I’m just being a girl or what |  |
| P | 1. but like lately I’ve just been feeling like |  |
| P | 1. and that’s the thing. |  |
| P | 1. Like I’m going to his place |  |
| P | 1. and he lives in a fraternity house, |  |
| P | 1. so he’s always with his friends and me. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| P | 1. I don’t know |  |
| P | 1. I don’t know |  |
| C | 1. C: Yeah, | 5 |

**In 113, given the information C has acquired she now is able to express a new perspective to P. Notice how P’s responses in 114-119 P articulates what she is feeling, not only in the context of her friends but also her boyfriend. She expresses feelings of alienation; these are sensitive and vulnerable feelings to express to a stranger. Go back to the beginning of the conversation where P mostly focuses on her friends being “bitchy” (53). Below P feels comfortable to not not explore but also divulge her feelings to C.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C | 1. He has the best of both worlds. | 9 |
| P | 1. P: He has the best of both worlds. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Right) | 5 |
| P | 1. and I’m just like like it just pisses me off. |  |
| P | 1. and like last night he was like what’s wrong? |  |
| P | 1. I’m like I don’t know like I just feel misplaced. |  |
| P | 1. and he was like- he didn’t understand what I was saying |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm), | 5 |
| P | 1. and he didn’t care to like elaborate on it. |  |
| P | 1. and he just went outside |  |
| P | 1. and was like talking to his friends |  |
| P | 1. and I was just like I went to bed. |  |
| P | 1. I don’t know |  |
| P | 1. like it’s good that like I’m talking about this now, because like I already decided like last night that like tonight I’m going to sleep home. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| P | 1. (inaudible) out with my friends. |  |
| C | 1. C: See what that’s like. | 6 |
| P | 1. P: Yeah, |  |
| P | 1. See what that’s like to go back home. |  |
| P | 1. And we’ll see but (inaudible). |  |
| C | 1. C: Is he like understanding about about like you hanging out with your friends? | 9 |
| P | 1. P: No. |  |
| P | 1. Oh yeah, |  |
| P | 1. he is. |  |
| C | 1. (C: ok) | 5 |
| P | 1. I told him |  |
| P | 1. and he’s just, like yeah you know you should go out. |  |
| P | 1. And yeah, he’s totally like you should go out, and if you |  |
| P | 1. he’s like if you feel like you’re not being with your friends, that’s not good. |  |
| C | 1. C: Mhm | 5 |

**C’s responses (144-148) to P’s question (143) further assists P in reflecting on her perspective. Notice how the individual utterances by C do not, by themselves reflect PC9. But taken together, they encourage P to reassess her emotional responses to her friends and what these friends mean to her, and how she might address her feelings of alienation toward her friends.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| P | 1. P: Did you ever have a situation like that? |  |
| C | 1. C: Well um I think that I kind of cause my freshman year my boyfriend didn’t go to the same school. | 9 |
| C | 1. And so he like I learned from watching my other friends separate and kind of distance themselves. | 9 |
| C | 1. I kind of learned from watching them not to do –separate (inaudible) friends. | 9 |
| C | 1. Cause it gets hard. | 9 |
| C | 1. Cause especially like do you feel like you knew them really well in the beginning of the year? do you ever feel like you knew them very well? | 9 |
| C | 1. I mean | 0 |
| P | 1. P: Yeah, and like before before break let out I was like really good friends with like three or four of them, |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| P | 1. like always hanging out and shit like that. |  |
| C | 1. C: Mhm | 5 |
| P | 1. P: and then break came |  |
| P | 1. and we all separated. |  |
| P | 1. but then when we came back it was cool again. |  |
| P | 1. and another one of them like my good friend, like the one that I’m probably the- she’s not my best friend or whatever |  |
| P | 1. but she has a boyfriend, |  |
| P | 1. um but she seems to manage her time well. |  |
| P | 1. you know |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| C | 1. C: She can have friends and boyfriend. | 6 |
| P | 1. P: Yeah. |  |
| P | 1. But she’s the But she’s like she’s so much different than me like personality. |  |
| P | 1. she’s like just |  |
| P | 1. from rrlike filling out these surveys, |  |
| P | 1. like do you allow yourself to get close to someone. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Mhm) | 5 |
| P | 1. she doesn’t. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Yeah) | 5 |
| C | 1. C: she’s very like-She’s fine with not getting close to people. | 6 |
| P | 1. P: Yeah, |  |
| P | 1. she like totally has a wall like except with her girlfriends. |  |
| P | 1. but with her boyfriend like I couldn’t see her spending all her time with. |  |

**C’s question in 176 reflects the emotional depth of an HPC conversation. This is a sensitive question. In addition, imagine if C had asked this question “right off the batt.” P would have likely not felt comfortable disclosing her feelings. So, difficult emotional questions such as these need to be asked at the right time.**

**Notice further how even an HPC conversation can contain lower level PC utterances (182).**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1. C: Do you feel like you’re the kind of person that gets emotionally attached to people really quickly? Or | 9 |
| P | 1. P: I don’t know. |  |
| P | 1. Uh I honestly don’t know. |  |
| C | 1. C: Depending on the person | 9 |
| P | 1. (P: Yeah) |  |
| C | 1. Yeah it totally depends on that. | 9 |
| C | 1. I’m sure everything will be- will turn out | 4 |
| P | 1. P: I hope it does. |  |
| C | 1. C: . Do you think that uh—Are these friends that you’re going to want to stay friends with after you leave the dorms and stuff? | 9 |
| P | 1. P: See, I don’t know. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Yeah) | 5 |
| P | 1. I don’t know. |  |
| P | 1. Like they’re all- we’re all living in the same apartment complex next year. |  |
| C | 1. (C: Uh huh) | 5 |
| P | 1. we’re all going to live at an apartment. |  |
| P | 1. next year like I’m going to live with two of my guy friends, |  |
| C | 1. (C: Right) | 5 |
| P | 1. and then like two girls living together. |  |
| P | 1. then my roommate, she’ll go somewhere. |  |
| P | 1. I don’t know. |  |

1. Model conversations: S001 for manual, S30 for training. Reliability Conversations: C105, FM14, F29. All data were collected by the first author at The Louisiana State University (LSU) and the second author at Arizona State University (ASU) and the University of Minnesota (UM). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)