

## MANAGING TURBULENT EMOTIONS DURING THE INTERVIEW

A student being interviewed in this setting will likely experience powerful swings of emotions, irritability, frustrations, rage, depression, and anger. These may occur sporadically throughout the process, and it is normal to experience rapid swings in emotions. When trying to manage these during an interview, consider these five points.



This is not about you (usually). Unless you have said or done something that was perceived as a barb during the interview, it is useful to understand intense emotions are part of this process. Many things have changed in their lives. They have a legitimate fear about how these events may impact future academic work, friendships, work opportunities and mental health.



You need to be impartial in this matter. Taking sides or reassuring either party about a likely outcome directly impacts this process and/or their perception of the process. This does not mean remaining unfeeling or cold. Offering compassion and kindness to those in pain is an important aspect of this work which helps build rapport and offers a professional level of interaction.



Be wary of advice that may not fit. While offering support services such as counseling, legal aid, victim advocacy, disability accommodations, medical treatment, and financial assistance may be sound advice, the interviewee may not be ready to hear it. Or they may have had a negative experience with a service like that in the past. Don't take it personal if they aren't ready.



Simple reflection is the process of sharing back, in their own words, what they just said. In emotional communication, this is often received by the interviewee as resonance with their feelings and helps calm them down and feel heard. Similarly, summarizing what they just said and asking if you got that right gives them an opportunity to correct you and provide more detail about what they had communicated.



Don't make it worse. Avoid asking questions that will escalate the situation. Have an open posture, lower the tone of your voice, and ask if there is anything you can do to help them right now. This may involve a bit of guesswork until you find the right connection. This can be like scrolling through various radio frequencies until you are able to find one that connects.