Say this, not that

Keep it on the fridge, or give a copy to the family.

Instead of	Try
“It’s just a bad period.”	“That sounds like a lot more than a period. What would help?”
“Just have a baby, it’ll sort it out.”	(To others:) “That’s private.”
“Have you tried this diet?”	“Do you want ideas, or shall I just listen?”
“Just relax, it’ll happen.”	“I’m sad too. What would help right now?”
“We never have sex any more.”	“I miss being close to you. What feels good at the moment?”
“How can I help?”	“Shall I cook tonight, or do the school run?”
“Don’t be silly.”	“That sounds hard. What’s making you feel that way?”

Validation in four steps

- [ ] Notice: stop, look at them, let them finish.
- [ ] Name it: “You look shattered.”
- [ ] Make sense of it: “After this week, of course you are.”
- [ ] Ask: “What would help most right now?”

When it goes wrong: “That came out wrong. I’m sorry. I do believe you.”

Our own phrases (fill in together):

Information, not medical advice. For questions about diagnosis or treatment, talk to the doctor or care team.
Based on: Kool et al.: Understanding the lack of understanding. Invalidation from the perspective of the patient with fibromyalgia (Arthritis & Rheumatism); Linton et al.: Painfully reassuring? The effects of validation on emotions and adherence in a pain test (European Journal of Pain)