Say this, not that

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

Instead of	Try
“You just need some exercise.”	“What feels manageable today?”
“You were fine yesterday.”	“Yesterday may be costing you today. What would help?”
“Have you tried this diet?”	“Do you want ideas, or shall I just listen?”
“We all get tired.”	“That sounds like a different kind of tired.”
“Can you just come for an hour?”	“Would ten minutes, or a video call, work better?”
“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)