

# Self Determination Theory (SDT)

A theory of motivation that helps to explain human behavior within a framework of **psychological needs satisfaction**.

## HOW TO SUPPORT THE THREE PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF SDT:

### RELATEDNESS:

- Acknowledge & express interest in perspectives, feelings, conflicts
- Empathically respond
- Be respectful & convey caring

### AUTONOMY:

- Treat people as responsible agents
- Recognize they have the power to choose within reasonable limitations
- Provide options

### COMPETENCE:

- Provide concrete instructions & rationale for recommendations
- Partner with person to problem-solve re: obstacles

## MOST IMPORTANTLY:

**BELIEVE IN PEOPLE'S INNATE DRIVE TOWARDS GROWTH AND HEALTH.**

- Do** listen, connect and validate
- Do** ask questions, ask permission
- Do** reflect back to them how they describe their emotions.



- Don't** argue ignore or lecture
- Don't** just fire off facts and stats
- Don't** overly focus on perceived offenses or ignore emotions.



## Challenging Conversations:

Real-world statements from health care workers with concerns about the COVID vaccine and potential SDT based responses.

**Q:** When they first rolled out, I had a feeling of hope that the vaccines were a solution to the pandemic; we finally had an answer. Now it feels as if the vaccines were rushed and they haven't seemed to work.

**A:** Wow, that must have felt like a lot to process at that time. I think a lot of people who initially felt like the vaccine came out very quickly had questions about the safety process. Luckily there were people working on vaccines to this type of virus for years. Would you like to know more?

**Q:** There are emails encouraging people to get the vaccine, but questions about safety and efficacy are not being answered. Questions get shut down.

**A:** I'm so sorry that you feel that your questions have been shut down; I imagine that is incredibly frustrating. I wonder if I could help answer your questions now? Is there something specific you are concerned about with the vaccines?

