

I Messages

Session 7 Handout

Goal

The goal in an “I message” is to express hurt feelings or distress, or to give feedback about another's behavior. The key is to focus on the consequences the other person’s troubling behavior causes us, rather than focusing on the person him/herself. By focusing on the consequences their behavior causes us, they are less likely to feel attacked or criticized.

Format

Behavior -> Feeling -> Consequence

The following formula can be helpful:

“When you (*state behavior*), I feel (*state feeling*) because (*state consequence for you*).”

Example of an “I” message: “When you interrupt me, I feel frustrated because I lose my train of thought.”

An “I” message has three parts: a Behavior, Feeling, and Result.

1. **Behavior:** *What is happening around you? What is the other person doing?*
2. **Feeling:** *How does the person’s behavior make you feel?*
3. **Consequence:** *What happens as a result? Use this form sentence:*

When you _____ (*behavior*), I feel _____ (*feeling*)

Because _____ (*result*).

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