

“I Statements” Skill Card

[Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#)

“I Statements” are a way to assertively communicate what we are feeling and thinking, why, and our perspectives, values, and needs in a relationship. They do so in a non-judgmental way without assigning blame. Using “I Statements” increases the likelihood that others will listen to us, try to understand us, pause before reacting, consider what we are saying, and possibly change their behavior to help us meet our needs. When two people can communicate effectively and satisfactorily work through misunderstandings and conflicts, their relationship becomes stronger.

Use the pronoun “I” and state what you feel or felt.

“ I feel...when you...”

“When you...I feel...”

Tell why you feel or felt that way.

“ I feel....when you...because...”

“When you...I feel...because...”

Telling someone how you feel and why may be all the situation needs. You may need to communicate what you want or need in the future and/or how you would like the person to be going forward.

Say how you want them to be in the future or how you would like things to be in the future.

“In the future, I would appreciate it if...”

“In the future, I would prefer...”

“In the future, I would like...”

“In the future, I would like both of us to...”

“In the future, I need...”

“In the future, I wish we...”

There are times when you may want to get a commitment from the other person. In those situations, ask them if they are willing to do what you are asking.

Say: “Are you willing to do that?”

“Are you willing to do that?”

Things To Avoid When Using “I Statements”

Avoid

1. Blaming
2. Assigning Bad Intentions
3. “You Statements”

You Statements

“You Statements” usually make people feel attacked, criticized, blamed, and defensive. When people feel defensive, they are more likely to attack, and they are less likely to listen, try to understand, suspend their reaction, consider what we are saying, and change their behavior to help us meet our needs. “You Statements” more than likely create a feeling of hostility, which tends to escalate conflicts, or the other person shuts down or tunes out, which stifles communication and problem-solving.

Examples of “you statements” include:

Preaching.

You should...(be on time)

Judging.

You are...(rude)

Put Downs

Can't you do anything right?

Criticism

You never do anything right, or you are always...

Giving Solutions

In the future, you should...

Threats

If you don't... then I will...

Asking Why in a Hostile and Judgmental Tone.

Why did you do that or why are you...?

Avoid Using “You Statements” Disguised as “I Statements”

When using an “I Statement,” make sure you state your feelings. People sometimes make the mistake of saying they feel something when they are actually using a “You Statement.”

Examples of “You Statements” Disguised as “I Statements”

“I feel that you should be on time.”

“I feel you are rude.”

“I feel like you aren't considerate of my feelings.”