

# The Formula for Communicating with "I Statements" (Communicating Difficult Feelings)

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ (state a feeling)

when \_\_\_\_\_ (what specific behavior was done that you are responding to)

because \_\_\_\_\_ (what need is not being met and what are the thoughts or beliefs about that need) .

What I want is \_\_\_\_\_ (describe the exact behavior that would meet your need)

"I Statements" help us to not use blaming "you" messages and to communicate four things:

1. The feeling I am having.
2. What the behavior is that I am responding to.
3. Why (the unmet need) I am feeling/responding they way I am.
4. What it is that meets the need I have.

Example:

I feel angry (the feeling)

when I am interrupted while I am speaking (the behavior I am responding to)

because I feel I have something to say about this. (the belief and unmet need)

What I want is to give my opinion uninterrupted. (how the need can be met)

## Things to remember about "I Statements":

1. It loses its effectiveness if the statement points blame at anyone. It is not about who did what, but how I feel about what happened and how it can be resolved.

Wrong example: I feel angry when **you** interrupt me.

Better example: I feel angry when I'm not listened to.

Wrong example: I feel upset when **you** lie to me.

Better example: I feel upset when I'm lied to.

Wrong example: What I want is for **you** to stop lying.

Better example: What I want is the truth.

2. It must be short with specifics—specific feelings and specific behaviors.