

“I” Messages

“I” messages allow you to express to someone your need for them to change their behavior, without blaming them or putting them down. “I” messages create a positive atmosphere for communication and problem solving.



There are four parts to an “I” message:

1. I feel . . .

state the feeling

I feel betrayed . . .

2. when you . . .

state the other person's behavior

when you tell other people something I told you in confidence . . .

3. because . . .

state the effect on you

because it's humiliating and it makes me feel I can't trust you.

4. I need . . .

state what you want to happen

I need to know that when I tell you something personal and private, you won't tell a single person.

“I” messages don’t always have to be about something negative. It’s important to send positive “I” messages, too.

“I’m really glad that you’ve been coming to the after-school study sessions. It makes me feel that you really care about your work. I’ll be glad to help you in any way I can.”

Beware of put-downs disguised as “I” messages.

“I can’t believe you’re such a slob! Everyday is miserable because of you. I want you out of my locker and out of my life!”