

## About These Lessons

These lessons are designed to teach children, adolescents, and adults appropriate communication skills amongst their family, friends, and in the community.

During the course of these lessons you will see a pattern to how each of these lessons are conducted. You are encouraged to take a close look at those participating in this session, and assign teams of two members per team for entire study before you get to group. Planning ahead will help prevent problems of friends w/friends, and personality conflicts. You may choose to match a stronger student with a weaker student. Teams will encourage members to get to know each other better, to help them feel comfortable in maybe some uncomfortable/personal situations, and learn to work together as a team.

There are no worksheets! All group sessions are active involvement. Notice that the term *role play* has been changed to *role-practicing* (lesson 1 explains the difference between these two terms). This is a chance for all to participate, so be ready! Behind each lesson you will see some worksheets for our CSW's to use as reinforcements only. Feel free to add any appropriate material as reinforcements to your lessons, providing that you share with our other offices, please.

Some suggestions to enhance these lessons, not noted in the curriculum, might be:

\*Handout name tags with pretend names and various ages. This will help students to adapt to speaking to others of different ages and gender.

\*A **homework** section is included at the end of each lesson. You may choose to refer to that section as a **challenge**. Children and teens may frown on homework.

# Lesson 1

## Role Practicing/Role Playing

### **Purpose**

To understand how to practice a real-life role

### **Skill Development**

The student will learn:

- How to understand guidelines for role playing
- How to practice a real-life situation with a peer
- How to show empathy in a situation- appropriately

### **Materials**

Role Playing handout

### **Introduction (3 minutes)**

The teacher will introduce role-playing as follows:

1. Tell the students they will learn how to **role practice**.
2. Explain that the term role practice means that they will be practicing real-life roles and **not** play-acting.
3. Tell the students that they will be practicing situations they come in contact with daily: home, school, community.
4. Let them know that these skills will help them to better relate to parents, peers, friends, and teachers.

### **Procedure (30 minutes)**

The activity is conducted as follows:

1. Pass out role playing guidelines to students
2. Ault/Adolescent: Describe a situation where someone's best friend was killed in a car accident. Have a peer to console this person.
3. Child: Describe a situation where a child's pet dies. Have a peer to console this child.
4. Demonstrate role practicing by acting out this scenario with a student.

## Role Practicing Guidelines

### **Purpose**

The purpose is to prepare students by role practicing real-life situations that relate to school, and home. Learning and practicing these roles is not playacting in make believe roles, such as role-playing.

Role practicing will enhance the awareness level of the student on how to behave and communicate appropriately in peer/family related roles by providing opportunity for students to practice good communication skills.

## **Simulation**

Role practicing simulates real-life situations in a school or home setting that are familiar to the participants. Students may feel awkward about being put on the spot during this think on their feet activity. The teacher should first demonstrate a role practicing activity with a student or co-worker in order to help the students feel comfortable.

## **Guidelines**

1. Students need to focus on their role as an effective leader, counselor, teacher, parent.
2. Focus on the specific behavior needed in order to communicate effectively. Think about how you will express your feelings through your tone of voice, the proper words to say, and using appropriate actions.
3. Imagine yourself at school/home: what does it look like, what are your surroundings, how you and your partner(s) should relate to each other in this particular situation.
4. Select a home or school related situation that is appropriate for role practicing. Help the child/adult to learn how to say "I- Feel" statements to improve communication between 2 people.
5. \*Make statements showing empathy---"I am sorry to hear of your friend's death", "I am here if you ever need to talk any time".
6. \*Change the subject. Suggest doing something with that person on the weekend or after school---"Would you like to go to the Squashbugger's game on Saturday night?"
7. \*If appropriate, show affection: hold hand, put your arm around them, give a hug
8. Discuss scenario and get input from the students.
9. Have students practice the same or other given situations. They may pair up into teams or do this as a group.
10. Ex: friend or family member moving to another city, failing in school, broke up with boy/girl friend, lost your job
11. Before beginning, have students close their eyes to visualize how they should feel and how to relate to peer.
12. Students open their eyes and begin role practicing
13. Allow 2 minutes to role practice and have students change roles.
14. Allow opportunities for all students to participate, having at least one turn.

## **Discussion**

1. How was empathy shown? By whom? To whom?
2. What was the most comforting thing said by the consoling peer?
3. What else could've been said or done to show empathy/comfort?

## **Appreciation (5 minutes)**

Have students say something positive about what another student said or did

that was comforting to them.

**Anticipated Results**

The students have learned to role practice and are now ready to use skills in real-life situations.

**Homework**

Use the role practice skills learned in a real-life situation, if one occurs.

## Lesson 2

# Learning Communication Skills/Conversation

### **Purpose**

To understand how to: begin, and carry on a conversation with a stranger.

### **Skill Development**

1. Learn skills to begin a conversation
2. Learn how to ask open-ended questions
3. Learn how to use and practice good listening skills

### **Materials**

Examples of open and closed questions  
Starting a Conversation Guidelines handout  
Paper and pencils to record list of ideas

### **Introduction (2 minutes)**

1. Tell the students that they will learn how to begin/start a conversation
2. Tell them that they will learn skills, making it easy to start and hold a conversation.
3. Tell them that good conversation skills make it easier to make and keep friends.

### **Procedure (40 minutes)**

1. Divide the students into teams. (Permanent teams would be more effective)
2. Assign one student as the facilitator and one as a recorder.
3. Have the students to come with typical approaches that they could use to start a conversation when meeting someone new.
4. Tell the recorders to write these ideas on paper.
5. Assist teams as needed.
6. When activity is completed, have the facilitator read and share their list of ideas with the other students.
7. Have the recorder to write new ideas given by the other teams on their list.
8. Demonstrate how to start a conversation by role practicing.
9. Ask teams to watch and give input on the demonstration.
10. Teacher begins by introducing yourself by name and asking the name of the other person.
11. Ask a question like "What do you like to do in your spare time?"
12. Follow up by asking, "How did you get started with this activity?"
13. Continue with the conversation by asking a related open-ended question, or by stating that you have the same thing in common. Example: If the person stated that "they began playing baseball in little league", then you may ask, "What do you like most about baseball?"
14. Have the students give input on the demonstration. Go over conversation guidelines.
15. Have students again pair off to practice this same activity using ideas gathered from list at the beginning of class.
16. Have students role practice each role for 2 minutes, and then switch places.

### **Starting a Conversation Guidelines**

1. Begin a conversation by giving the other person a compliment (smile, jewelry, clothes, hair). Your voice should sound sincere and not phony. If complementing a person's smile, eyes, or hair ---BE POLITE.
2. When speaking, use eye contact and smile.
3. Question what the other person's interests are: "What do you like to do in your spare time?"
4. Then follow up by asking an open-ended sentence: "How did you get started in \_\_\_\_\_?"
5. Use good listening skills by not interrupting and by listening carefully in order to continue conversation from the theme of the last sentence. Continue the conversation by asking a related open-ended question, or by stating that you have the same thing in common.
6. Avoid asking interview type questions and questions that can be answered with a yes or no. Questions that can be answered with yes or no are called closed-ended questions.
7. Ex: "Do you like to fish?" ---**Closed-ended** answers yes or no.  
"Why do you like to fish?" ---**Open-ended** may answer, "I like to go fishing with my dad at the lake."
8. A follow up question maybe: "How often do you and your dad go fishing?"
9. Also, avoid asking personal questions that may offend the other person or about things the other person has not talked about. Continue with the topic started.

### **Discussion**

1. How did you get to know your partner better?
2. What did you learn new about your partner?
3. What did you have in common?

### **Anticipated Results**

The students will know how to begin a conversation, and feel at ease when meeting and talking to a new friend.

### **Home Work**

Start a conversation with someone at school/neighborhood that you would like to get to know.

## Lesson 3

# Learning Listening Skills

### **Purpose**

To learn skills in becoming a good listener

### **Skill Development**

The student will be able to use good eye contact

Comprehend what is being said and the feeling behind the message

Learn active listening techniques

Learn to ask good open-ended questions

### **Materials**

Good listening skills -3 step handout

### **Introduction (2 minutes)**

1. Tell the students that they will learning good listening skills
2. Tell them good listening skills will help them to hold friendly conversations.
3. Students are to comprehend what is being said and the feeling behind the message, by responding with a smile, by nodding, and by asking an open-ended question.

### **Procedure (30 minutes)**

1. Students will get together with their partner(s)/team mate
2. Hand out Good Listening Skills-3 Step handout
3. Discuss handout with students
4. Teacher and student/co-worker are to demonstrate by role practicing.
5. Teacher demonstrates the role as the good listener; student is the speaker
6. Teacher asks the student to tell you about someone they admire the most.  
(This may be a friend, someone famous, family member, etc.)  
"\_\_\_\_\_, tell me about someone you admire the most."
7. Use good listening skills and open-ended questions to conduct the conversation.
8. Afterwards, discuss with the students the good listening skills used during role practicing demonstration.
9. Teams will role practice the same scenario, changing roles after 3 minutes.
10. Assist teams when needed.

### **Discussion (10 minutes)**

1. What good listening skills did you observe your team mate using?
2. How did it make you feel knowing that you were being listened to?
3. How does it make you feel when people do not listen to you? Explain.
4. Did you find it difficult to be a good listener? Why?

### **Appreciation (5 minutes)**

Students are to make a positive statement to their partner about one thing they said

today.

**Anticipated Results**

For students to know how to be good listeners, and to be able to use skills during a conversation.



## **Good Listening Skills in 3 Steps**

**STEP 1:** Use good eye contact, focusing on the speaker. Listen intently to what is being said and the feeling behind the message.

**STEP 2:** Acknowledge that you understand what the speaker is saying by using facial expressions, such as a smile, and by nodding your head, or by making comments such as, "That's great", or "I agree".

**STEP 3:** Make sure to ask open-ended questions. Listen to what is being said, and by using topic from last statement made, ask an open-ended question.

## **Guideline to Reflective Listening Techniques**

**Reflective Listening**—Acknowledging that you understand the speaker's message and the feelings behind the message by giving verbal and nonverbal feedback. Do not interrupt the speaker, but reflect back in your own words that you understand the content and feelings of the speaker's message. Reflective Listening includes the following techniques:

### **Clarifying**

Ask open-ended questions to get a clear understanding or interpretation of what is said. An example would be to ask the following question: "Help me understand the situation. What was the problem between the two of you?"

### **Restating**

Restate the speaker's message in your own words to let the speaker know that you understand the content and feelings behind the message. A sample statement would be: "I hear you saying that you feel your teacher is impatient with you." Focus your statement on the basic ideas and facts of the speaker's message.

### **Summarizing**

Summarize the speaker's message to review and pull together important ideas and facts by restating the major ideas or facts to establish a basis for further conversation. An example of summarizing would be: "So you've been to see both teachers and one of them won't sign your contract."

### **Validating**

Validating the speaker's message acknowledges the positive meaning of the statement. A sample statement might be, "Thanks for caring about us."

### **Encouraging**

Encouraging the speaker to continue talking by taking an interest in what he/she is saying. An example would be: "Tell me more about the situation."

# Lesson 4

## Identifying and Learning From Poor Listening Habits

### **Purpose**

To understand how to identify and learn from poor listening habits.

### **Skill Development**

1. Students will learn to recognize and identify poor listening skills— verbal and nonverbal.
2. Learn to use positive communication skills by countering poor listening skills.

### **Materials**

Pencil and paper

Poor Listening Skills handout

### **Introduction (2 minutes)**

1. The students will learn to identify and avoid poor listening habits.
2. Explain to the students that poor listening habits discourages friends from having a good conversation with you.
3. Refer to the handout to provide a visual explanation of poor listening habits.

### **Procedure (30 minutes)**

1. Students get into their teams. Pass out the Poor Listening Skills handout.
2. Have students look at the handout, and have come up with additional examples.
3. Have a student record the examples given on paper.
4. Tell the students that they may use these examples and the examples given on the chart during their role play.
5. Pair off with a student or co-worker to demonstrate role play for poor listening habits.
6. Have your partner to discuss their favorite place to go on the weekend or your plans for vacation.
7. Respond to your partner by demonstrating poor verbal and nonverbal listening skills. Refer to handout.
8. Have the students to give feed back of the listener.
9. After students give their feedback, have them to role practice this same activity with their partner.
10. Have students to do this for 2 minutes, then switch roles.
11. Assist teams as needed.

**Discussion**

1. Name the poor listening habit that bothered you most. Why?
2. What was your feelings when your partner didn't listen to you?
3. Has there been times when others didn't listen to you? How did it make you feel?
4. Have each student name one positive thing they learned from this exercise,

**Instructional Tips**

1. Read the nonverbal and verbal poor listening skills on the handout with the students.
2. Use the handout throughout the activity.

**Anticipated Results**

Students will have learned to identify and the meaning of communicating verbally and nonverbally.

**Homework**

Practice using good listening skills. Take note of when you do and when others listen to you.

## **Poor Listening Skills**

### **Nonverbal:**

- \*Not making eye contact by looking down or at someone else.**
- \*Yawning and looking bored.**
- \*Looking at you watch.**
- \*Fidgeting or demonstrating a lack of interest.**

### **Verbal:**

- \*Saying, "I only have two minutes of time to give you."**
- \*Interrupting or changing the subject, an example could be:  
Speaker: "I'm really excited about my new project."  
Listener: "I can't wait to begin my vacation next Monday."**
- \*The "me too syndrome" by drawing attention back to self.  
For example: Speaker: "I really feel bad about not reaching my weekly goals." Listener: "I met my weekly goals last week."**
- \*The "advise syndrome" by telling the person what to do. An example could be: Speaker: "I wish Mr. Jones would help me with my math."  
Listener: "You don't need his help because you are smarter than he is."**

# Lesson 5

## Learning How To Observe Verbal & Non-verbal Communication

### **Purpose**

The student will be able to understand verbal and nonverbal communication patterns by observation.

### **Skill Development**

1. Student will learn to observe verbal and nonverbal communication with peers/others.
2. Students will ask questions and use reflective listening to determine whether verbal and nonverbal communication is being used.

### **Materials**

Guide line to Verbal and Nonverbal Communication  
Paper and pencils

### **Introduction (30 minutes)**

1. Explain to the students that today they will learn how to understand and use verbal and nonverbal communication skills by practicing with a peer.
2. Explain to them that they will be using body language to determine the mood of their peers.  
(Such as: tone of voice, arm and hand gestures, facial expressions, and posture)
3. Tell them that they will be able to communicate better with other people once they learn to understand the feelings of other people.

### **Procedure (30 minutes)**

1. Put students in their teams and assign a facilitator and a recorder.
2. Pass out the Guidelines to Verbal and Nonverbal Communication. Go over Guidelines to help students get familiar with the methods of communication.
3. Team facilitators will lead the discussion by asking:  
When parents get home from work, how can you tell what kind of day they have had?  
How can you tell what kind of mood your teacher is in?  
How can you tell the feelings of your peers?
4. The team recorder will record answers on paper.
5. When completed, have a group discussion.
6. Teacher will perform a role practicing activity with another adult or a peer. Role practice the following situation: During a ball game a player strikes out. (A typical put down might be "Johnny, you can't bat!" "You stink at ball!")
7. Have teams to role practice his/her feelings for being put down by referring to the guideline sheet to select and act out the mannerism which best describes his/her feelings.

8. Interpret the behavior by asking "(partner), are you angry about what happened?"
9. After partner replies, have the other partner follow up by using reflective listening skills to show that they understand the feelings behind the message.
10. After 2 minutes, have the partners to switch roles.
11. Teacher will assist teams as needed.

### **Instructional Tips**

1. To prepare, the teacher should first try to observe and interpret nonverbal messages.
2. Reviewing will better prepare the teacher to understand how to use these communication skills.
3. The body expresses what is in the mind and nonverbal expressions of feelings or emotions can be very powerful. Being an observer, you must be able to accurately interpret nonverbal messages. Sound "translation" of nonverbal messages requires checking for accuracy of an interpretation of these messages. You can do this through reflective listening techniques. This is when the observer asks the observed person a question to completely understand the meaning of the nonverbal message. An example would be "Sue, I see that you have a sneer on your face. Did what Martha say make you mad?" After Sue responds, use the "stating" reflective listening technique to show that you understand the message of their feelings.  
(See Reflective Listening Techniques)
4. Review the guidelines for Verbal and nonverbal Communication with the students. Refer to the message and allow the students give examples of what each message means.

### **Anticipated Results**

The students will have learned how to understand and observe verbal and nonverbal communication of others, and feel comfortable enough to use skills learned.

### **Homework**

Be able to tell of one time you used verbal and nonverbal communication during the week.

## **Words Illustrating Feelings and Emotions**

**Frustrated**-- anxious, worried, nervous, uptight, concerned

**Calm**-- composed, serene, cool, tranquil, steady

**Afraid**-- frightened, terrified, scared, fearful, intimidated

**Angry**-- mad, offended, furious, displeased, annoyed

**Happy**-- elated, glad, delighted, cheerful, merry

**Sad**-- unhappy, sorrowful, dejected, miserable, gloomy



# Guidelines For Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

## ***Verbal Messages:***

**Sounds:** grunts, squeals, giggles, laughing

**Speech tones:** high or low-pitched voice, shouting, quivering voice

**Speech rate:** nervous, fast, slow, normal, confident

## ***Nonverbal Messages:***

**Gestures:** talking with the hands or arms, thumbs or fingers up or down, closed fist upraised, kicking of legs

**Postures:** slouched shoulders, chest upraised, head on desk, standing straight

**Facial expressions:** grin or smile, sneer or squint, puckered lips, furrowed forehead, raised eyebrows

## COMMUNICATION

We communicate in life in many different ways. When we communicate, we are telling someone else about ourselves. This may be an expression of our thoughts, wants, needs and emotions. How do we communicate? We communicate by speaking to others. We may say "I like you" or "I am hungry." How does another person know that is what you mean. By other forms of communication that we use. If you tell someone that you like them and then ignore them, they may not believe you. You are saying one thing and communicating another. You may say "I want to work out problems with my family." Then, everytime your family is around, you yell at them. Your family may think you really do not want to work out problems. "I want to graduate high school." Yet, you do no homework, skip school and get in fights. Other forms of communication may be telling people you do not want to graduate.

What are other forms of communication. Eye contact. If you do not look at someone when you talk to them, they may feel you are not interested in what they are saying. They may feel you are not telling the truth.

Tone of voice. You may say you are interested in what I am saying, yet your voice suggests you would rather be anywhere else rather than listen to me.

Voice volume. You may tell someone "I am not angry." However, you say this at a level loud enough to break ear drums. A person may believe you are really very angry.

Behavior is a key element to communication. What you do, communicates to others about yourself. If you say one thing and act another way, people will tend to believe the behavior. "I am a very happy person." Yet, you attempt suicide. People may believe you are not very happy.

Body language is a form of communication. We may say that we are very comfortable being around other people and speaking to them. We then begin to isolate ourselves, pace when around others, wring our hands and sit in a rigid position. Are you really comfortable. It would appear not.

## **Lesson 6**

# **Learning Empathy With Others**

### **Purpose**

To understand another person's feelings by learning to listen from the heart.

### **Skill Development**

1. The student will learn how to show understanding of a person's messages by using reflective listening.
2. To understand another persons feelings behind their words and actions.

### **Materials**

Guideline to Reflective Listening  
Illustrating Feelings and Emotions

### **Introduction (5 minutes)**

1. Instruct the students that they will learn to understand another person's feelings by learning to listen from the heart.
2. Explain that they will listen to what the other person is saying, and understand the feelings and actions behind the words.
3. Have the students try to put themselves in the place of the other person, and feel what he/she is feeling.
4. Tell the students that empathy is putting away your feelings and concerns, and turning your attention on the other person.
5. Tell the students that they will review the Guidelines to Reflective Listening, & use these techniques to understand their partners feelings and the content of his/her messages. The students will also know how to show the other person that others care about them and the way they are feeling.

### **Procedure (5 minutes)**

1. Have the students divide into their teams.
2. Use the activities used in Lesson 5.
3. Conduct a role practicing activity with another adult or student.
4. Have the participant to choose the most disliked verbal or nonverbal behavior from the Guidelines to Reflective Listening.
5. Before conducting the role practicing activity, go over the Guidelines to Reflective Listening techniques and the list of items.
6. The students may use the chart of feelings words as a guide to choose the appropriate words to express their feelings/emotions during the role practicing.
7. Begin role practicing by asking an open-ended sentence, such as: Why does this "annoying" behavior offend you the most?
8. After the student acknowledges his/her feelings, use the reflective listening techniques to show that you are in touch with their feelings and understand the message. Do this for 2 minutes.
9. Then have the students to state and describe the examples of reflective listening techniques used.
10. Have the students to choose verbal and nonverbal styles of communication that they do not like and to role practice it with their partner. Have the students change roles after 2 minutes.
11. The teacher should assist the groups as needed.

**Discussion (10 minutes)**

1. Which techniques did you use in reflective listening?
2. Was your partner able to show that he/she cared for your feelings? How?
3. Tell what you learned about reflective listening.

**Appreciation ( 5 minutes)**

Have the students to say something positive about how their partner did or what they said during the activity.

**Instructional Helps**

1. Use the guidelines to reflective listening to explain the different techniques. Refer to the questions and statements at the end.
2. Use the feelings word list that describes different emotions to help students learn to show empathy.
3. Give each student/group a copy of the feelings word list.

**Anticipated results**

The students will be able to get in touch with the feelings of others by understanding their (the others) actions and words. Students will understand and feel competent when using their messages through reflective listening skills.

**Homework**

Show empathy by using reflective listening techniques to someone during the week. Take the time to listen to an older person, a burdened friend or a family member.

**BEING ASSERTIVE**

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Family,

At school we're exploring the social-emotional skill *being assertive*.

Enclosed is a copy of *What's the Bottom Line?* which shares the definition, the skill steps, and the rationale for using this skill. Other information from this unit may be enclosed too.

For this assignment, I need to sit down with you to discuss this information. We can also talk about how the information may relate to our family.

After our discussion, please sign below, indicating I completed this assignment with you. I need to return this to school on or before the due date listed above.

For extra credit, we can role-play one of the following situations:

**Home**—Suppose I am frequently asked to do the dishes but my sister is never asked. I will demonstrate how I could express my feelings to you in an assertive way.

**School**—Suppose a classmate keeps whispering to me during class, which leads to my getting into trouble. Pretend you are the classmate, and I will demonstrate how I could express my feelings to you in an assertive way.

**Community**—Suppose I am next in line to be helped by a sales clerk. Instead of helping me, the clerk continues to help adults behind me. Pretend you are the clerk, and I will demonstrate how I could express my feelings to you in an assertive way.

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_

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Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you discuss the skill information?

Did you do the extra credit?

Comments:

# How to Use Encouragement

## How to show trust:

“I like the way you handled that.”

“Knowing you, I am sure you will do fine.”

“I think you can do it.”

“I am sure you can decide this by yourself.  
If you need help, I’ll be right here.”

“I would like to know your opinion about  
....”

## How to show the importance of hard work:

“If you keep working, you’ll probably get  
it.”

“Working hard pays off.”

“Hard work is not always easy, but it’s al-  
ways worth it.”

## How to point out strengths and improvements:

“It looks as if you worked hard at ....”

“Look at the progress you have made in ....”

“You have really improved in ....”

## How to teach children to learn from mistakes:

“So you made a mistake, what can you do  
about it?”

“If you are not satisfied, what can you do?”

## How to encourage responsibility:

“It’s up to you.”

“If you want to.”

“You can decide that for yourself.”

“Your decision will be fine with me.”

# Lesson 7

## Learning How To Form I-Feel Statements

### **Purpose**

To learn how to change negative "You" statements to positive "I" statements.

### **Skill Development**

The student will realize the meaning of "I-Feel" statements and learn how to express their feelings by using "I"-statements instead of "you"- statements.

### **Materials**

"I" and "You" Messages handout and worksheet

Words Illustrating Feelings and Emotions handout from Lesson 7

### **Introduction (5 minutes)**

1. Inform the students that they will learn how to use "I"-Feel
2. Tell students they will learn statements to communicate their feelings to others by understanding that they are responsible for telling others how their behavior affects them.
3. Explain that is easier to put down the other person using a "you" statement such as "you're stupid!"
4. Distribute the handout and explain what a "You" message is.
5. Explain that by using positive "I" messages, you are expressing your feelings without putting someone down or hurting their feelings.
6. Hand out the I-Feel Statements handout.

### **Procedure (30 minutes)**

1. Have the students get into their teams.
2. Review the "I" and "You" message handouts.
3. Pass out and review the Feeling Word List.
4. Pass out the "You and I" worksheets and have the students work together in their teams to complete worksheet.
5. Look at situation 1 on the worksheet and read the sample "you and I" messages with the students to help give them an understanding of how to complete the rest of the worksheet.
  - Have students to complete situations 2-6.
  - Prompt students to refer to the "feelings words" list in order to appropriately express their feelings.
  - Assist by giving definitions to "feelings words", students may not know.

### **Instructional Tips**

1. Demonstrate the 3 parts an I-message consists of when referring to the I-message handout.
2. Instruct the students to use say I-messages by using their own words instead of memorizing and trying to say 3 parts of speech.
3. Encourage the students to follow the illustration on the handout to begin a "You" message.

**Anticipated Results**

Students will understand how to replace "you" statements with I-Feel messages and realize their importance.

Students will feel comfortable in using skills learned.

**Homework**

Take notice of how many times you used or didn't use I-Feel statements. Make an attempt not to use "you" statements.



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## "I" AND "YOU" MESSAGES

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### *POSITIVE CONFRONTATION*

When confronting a team member about a communication problem, you should be assertive and speak in terms of how this person's action affects you on a personal level (use "I" messages). Don't confront a team member in an aggressive manner that puts this person "down" or attempts to make him/her look stupid by using "you" messages.

### *"I" MESSAGES*

An "I" message has three parts:

- (1) the feeling that results from the other person's behavior
- (2) the behavior that is exhibited by the other person
- (3) the tangible effect as a result of this behavior

When using an "I" message, you should use your own choice of words and think in terms of how this behavior affects you on a personal level rather than putting the blame for the behavior on the other person. *Examples of "I" messages are as follows:*

<b>Feeling:</b>	I feel great
<b>Behavior:</b>	When you help me with my algebra
<b>Tangible Effect:</b>	Because I am able to complete my assignment correctly
<b>Feeling:</b>	I feel frustrated
<b>Behavior:</b>	When you interrupt me
<b>Tangible Effect:</b>	Because I have some important information to share with you

*The following material describes "I" message behavior:*

<b>Actions:</b>	Calm manner, controlled movements, good eye contact
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## "I" AND "YOU" MESSAGES

(continued)

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<b>Words:</b>	I'm angry Please don't interrupt me Because I have some good news to tell you
<b>Feelings:</b>	Confident, responsible, and sensitive to others' feelings

### "YOU" MESSAGES

Most people use blaming or "you" messages to convey their feelings when they are mad or frustrated. An aggressive "you" message offends the other person or makes him/her feel stupid. "You" messages usually take the following form:

<b>Ordering:</b>	"You will not go to the concert."
<b>Warning:</b>	"You had better improve your school attendance or you will have to stay after school to make up time."
<b>Judging:</b>	"That was a stupid thing for you to do."
<b>Name Calling:</b>	"You stupid jerk."

*An example of a "You" message is:*

"You jerk, stop interrupting me or I won't talk to you anymore."

The following describes aggressive "you" message behavior:

<b>Actions:</b>	Physical contact, nasty stares, angry
<b>Words:</b>	If you interrupt me one more time, I'm leaving because you are a very inconsiderate person.
<b>Feelings:</b>	Angry, selfish, insecure

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## "I" AND "YOU" MESSAGES WORK SHEET

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**Directions:** Print an "I" and a "You" message for each situation. The first is completed for you.

**SITUATION**

**"YOU" MESSAGE**

**"I" MESSAGE**

1. A person interrupts you.

1. You jerk! Shut-up or I won't talk to you anymore.

1. I'm angry when you call me names because I want to be treated with respect.

2. A friend ignores you.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. A friend borrows money and does not pay it back.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. A peer teases you a lot in front of others.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. A peer takes something of yours without asking.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. A friend gossips about you and other friends.

6. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

**You statements**

*Blaming:* "You make me so mad."

*Judging or labeling:* "You are an inconsiderate, hostile, arrogant creep."

*Accusing:* "You don't give a damn about me!"

*Ordering:* "You shut up!"

*Questioning:* "Are you always this flirtatious?" or "Why did you do that? I feel like slapping your face."

*Arguing:* "You don't know what you are talking about."

*Sarcasm:* "Of course, you are an expert!"

*Approving:* "You are wonderful."  
"You are attractive."

*Disapproval:* "You are terrible."

*Threatening:* "You had better..."

*Moralizing:* "You ought to ..."

*Treating:* "You need to rest and..."

*Supporting:* "It will get better."

*Analyzing:* "You can't stand to leave your mother!"

**"I" statements**

"I feel angry when you \_\_\_\_." Or, "I have chosen to let it bother me when you \_\_\_\_."

"I feel betrayed when you criticize me in front of others."

"I feel neglected when you avoid me."

"I feel annoyed when you call me names and make fun of me."

"I really feel insecure about our relationship when you flirt."

"I feel convinced it is this way."

"I would like you a lot more if you were a bit more humble."

"I really am impressed with your \_\_\_\_ and besides I like you. I am attracted to you."

"I feel crushed when you seem only interested in spending my money."

"I'd like it if you'd ..."

"I think it would be fair for you to..."

"I'd like to be helpful to you."

"I'm sorry you feel ..."

"I'm disappointed that you are so reluctant to leave..."

Note that many of the "you" statements are intended to exert power, to control, to intimidate, or to put down the other person. They are not statements made by non-judgmental, mutually respecting equals. They are authoritarian statements made by manipulators. That's why Gordon (1975) recommended "I" statements to parents when talking to children. Watch out for "you" statements.

Personal responsibility is avoided in other ways too: we use "we," "it" or "they" when we are trying to depersonalize our comment and/or vaguely conceal our feelings or opinions.

Sometimes we use "we" when trying to make it sound like a lot of people agree with us, while in reality no one has authorized us to speak for them. We should take responsibility for expressing our own opinions or feelings.

Examples:

We, it, they statements

"Most people would have an affair if they wouldn't get caught."

"The group isn't interested in ..."

"The glass slipped out of my hand."

"People have a hard time with math."

"The group is trying to help you."

"This weather is depressing."

"This class is boring."

"I" statements

"I would have an affair if..."

"I don't think the group cares..."

"I dropped the glass."

"I am ashamed of my math score."

"I want to understand you but I'm having a hard time."

"I feel depressed."

"I feel bored."

The last example above, shows how our language also causes us problems. It is important to be aware that *personal opinions sound like facts* when one uses a form of "am" or "is," such as "you are...", "I am...", "it is..." and so on. Furthermore, in addition to sounding factual, such statements imply the whole person is a certain way and will be forever. Example: "You are selfish" is a pronouncement which implies that there are no unselfish traits anywhere in the person's personality--and that the entire person will stay that way forever. This is probably untrue; it is an over-generalization. It would be much more accurate and effective to say, "I resent it when you make plans for the entire family without asking what the rest of us want to do."

When personal opinions are stated as facts, it is no wonder that arguments arise. Note the use of "is" in this example:

**Person A:** "This class *is* a lot of work but it contains useful information."

**Person B:** "This class *is* a complete waste of time."

These two people could debate the merits and faults of the class for an hour. It could degenerate into a personal conflict, like "You're the teacher's pet" and "You wouldn't like anything that required a brain" and go on and on. On the other hand, if A and B had made "I" statements there would have been no argument.

**Person A:** "I really like the self-help class, especially the group."

**Person B:** "I'm disappointed in that class because I'm not getting anything out of my group or those ridiculously long readings."

In this case, A and B can see that they have responded very differently to the same class. There can be no argument about that. The class isn't inevitably great or terrible; it meets

many peoples' needs but not everyone's. After the "I" statements, A and B could discuss their differences and learn more about themselves, each other, their groups, and the class.

In summary,

- An "I" statement may have 2 to 4 parts: (a) it is a self-disclosure, referring to "I," "me" or "my," (b) it expresses a feeling, urge or impulse, (c) it may describe the other person's behavior which is related to your feelings, and (d) it may indicate what you would like to see changed, much like an assertive statement.
- Assume responsibility for your feelings and opinions, don't hide behind the "it" or the editorial "we."
- Avoid stating personal opinions as facts and avoid the over-generalizations sometimes implied by forms of the verb "to be," like "are," "is," "am" and so on..

Clearly, giving an "I" statement is more constructive than giving an order, an accusation, a moral judgment, and so on. However, this is not an easy concept to grasp. The pronoun "you" is used all the time, many uses are not bad. Try to become aware of the undesirable ways you use "you."

#### **STEP TWO: Look for opportunities to use "I" statements.**

Review the examples of "you" and "we" statements above and see if any remind you of possible situations in your life. If so, make some notes on how you could handle such situations differently in the future and perhaps plan to arrange an opportunity to try out "I" statements.

Pay special attention to stressful relationships or when you want to communicate in sensitive areas, such as sex, anger, submissiveness and others.

Look over the purposes mentioned above. Do any apply to you? If so, give some thought to how you can handle the situations better.

#### **STEP THREE: Practice giving "I" messages in your daily conversations.**

Most of us (me too!) find it hard to change our speech patterns. We feel awkward. "I" statements seem counter to what we have been taught in English classes, "Don't say I, I, I." We are self-conscious about focusing on ourselves. It takes practice to get comfortable with "I" statements. Role-playing (method #1) may be a good way to start seeing how well they work.

Keep watching for opportunities in casual conversations to express a feeling or an opinion tactfully. Act quickly, as soon as you are aware of a feeling say, "I am feeling..." Most people are interested in genuine feelings, especially if the feelings involve them. It is nourishment for growing friendships.

Tell yourself that one of the best ways to resolve a conflict is for all relevant factors to be considered in arriving at a "no-lose" solution (see method #10). Your feelings, needs, and preferences are important factors! So are the other person's. Feelings have to be shared, diplomatically.

### **Time involved**

The idea of an "I" statement is easy, monitoring your thinking and speech to catch blaming, judging, controlling "you" statements is not easy. This takes time. If you have a problem in this area and carefully concentrated on it for a week, you would be expressing yourself differently.

### **Common problems**

Many of us experience such strong (unexpressed) needs to be blameless, to blame the circumstances or others, to change others and so on, that it is difficult to avoid using whatever "power" we think we have to control others. "You" statements seem to come naturally.

If you decide to openly disclose some strong feelings, many people will quickly urge you to suppress your feelings. For example, if you tell a person, "I'm really depressed," the person is likely to say, "Cheer up!" or, in other words, "Don't talk about it." Strong emotions make some people uncomfortable; disclose slowly with them.

It is quite common for a beginning psychology student to become so obsessed with what words he/she is using that the concern with how-to-say-it is inhibiting. A learner can lose his/her emotional spontaneity for a while, until the new skill is well learned. Later, you will be a better communicator of feelings than ever before--at least more clear and tactful. Another confusion is that empathy responses (method #2) are often "you" statements. However, "you feel..." in empathy is a tentative, inquiring statement, whereas "you are..." statements are dogmatic oversimplifications. There is a big difference in intent, if not in actual words.

In some cases, depending in part on your tone of voice and demeanor, an "I" statement may not differ greatly from a "you" statement. If a parent yells, "I feel furious and want to beat the hell out of you when you don't do your work and get smartalecky," this is similar to "You are a smart-mouthed, defiant little punk." Blame is clearly indicated in this angry "I" statement, and it certainly makes demands on the child. This can become a power struggle. Ideally, non-blaming "I" statements should lead into problem-solving and better relations. A no-lose approach would work better (see method #10).

### **Effectiveness, advantages and dangers**

There is little or no research assessing the effectiveness of this method, although several writers praise it, as I do.

There are certain apparent advantages as mentioned above. "I" statements do not offend as much; they may reduce defiance and encourage compliance. Also, as you formulate "I" statements in your own head, you become more aware of your true feelings. Likewise, explaining yourself to another person often clears up your own thinking and views about a troublesome situation.

"I" statements are more likely to improve a relationship, certainly better than demanding, whining, asking accusatory questions, manipulating, accusing, and criticizing will do. There are no known dangers, except the problems mentioned in e above.

## "I" MESSAGES

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"I" messages for expressing feelings. Accepting responsibility for your feelings.

This is one of the most important skills you can acquire. A good rule of thumb is: "If you have a problem, make an 'I' statement. If you are helping someone with a problem, make empathy responses." An "I" statement consists of a description of how you feel and an indication of the conditions under which you feel that way. It takes this form: "I feel (*your emotions*) when (*under what conditions*)."

It will be helpful if you recognize how many decisions *you* have made in the process of becoming emotional or upset. We have already discussed how feelings develop in great detail in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. Also chapter 12 reviews how emotions develop and explains how we understand (make sense out of) our own internal emotional reactions by observing the circumstances we are in, i.e. "I am mad because you seem to be neglecting me" or "I am scared (or excited) in front of a large audience." Building on this cognitive approach, David Johnson (1981) says several things must happen--your decisions--before feelings get communicated: (1) we must perceive what is going on, (2) we interpret, rightly or wrongly, the situation (what is motivating the other person's actions, are those causes good or bad?), (3) we use our view of the situation--our interpretation of why the other person did whatever he/she did--to decide exactly what it is we are feeling, (4) our feelings prompt us to take some kind of action, but (5) our intentions (to hurt, to avoid, to help, etc.) determine how our feelings actually get expressed or handled. (6) Finally, as discussed in chapter 12, we may decide to conceal our feelings, deny them, repress them, convert them into physical symptoms, blame others and demand that others change, or express them inappropriately or appropriately, as in self-disclosure or "I" statements. Or, of course, if we don't like our feelings, we can try to change them (see chapters 12 and 14). There are lots of places in this getting-upset process where we alone are responsible for the choices we make (although we are often tempted to blame someone else for upsetting us).

In short, from the cognitive viewpoint, how we handle our feelings is based on *our* perceptions, *our* attributions, *our* understanding of what we are feeling, and *our* intentions. Thus, as humanistic-existentialistic therapists have also contended for a long time, *we are responsible* for our feelings, because *we have chosen*, through each of 5 or 6 steps, to feel whatever we feel (no matter how miserable), so we must "own" our feelings. In short, no one can *make* us feel any way; we decide. (Note: Freudians, learning theorists, sociobiologists, drug-oriented psychiatrists, physiologists with interests in hormones, genes and neurotransmitters, and many others may not agree with this highly conscious, cognitive explanation of emotions.)

Regardless of the etiology of feelings, suppressing or denying our feelings may lead to several problems: (1) increased irritability and conflicts with others, (2) difficulty resolving interpersonal problems (being "logical" doesn't mean ignoring feelings, but dealing with them), (3) distorted perception and blind spots (like seeing only the bad parts of a person we are mad at) in a relationship, and (4) other people may suspect we have feelings and ask us to be honest with them (which is hard to do if we are being dishonest with ourselves--or unaware). These are good reasons for expressing our feelings in a tactful, constructive



manner. "I" statements serve this purpose.

"I" statements do not judge, blame, threaten, put down or try to control others; they simply report how you feel, which is rarely challengeable by anyone else. When you make an "I" statement, you are taking responsibility for your emotions. "I" statements inform others about your feelings and, thus, may lead to change, but they do not demand change or direct others. They leave the other person responsible and free to decide if he/she will change to accommodate your needs.

### **Purposes**

Consider using "I" statements:

- any time you want to share your feelings or desires in a frank, unthreatening, undemanding way. When you are trying to disclose more about yourself to build a relationship.
- any time stress is experienced in a relationship, especially if you are feeling angry or dissatisfied or if the other person is resistive to changing in response to your requests or demands.
- if both parties have problems, i.e. both of you can take turns giving "I" statements and giving empathy responses.
- if the other person is using a lot of "you" (blaming, critical) statements, try to translate them into "I" statements and empathize with the accuser's feelings.

### **Steps**

**STEP ONE: Understand when to use and how to use "I" statements in place of "you" statements and other harmful statements.**

In order to communicate our feelings clearly, we must, of course, be aware of them, comfortable or at least accepting of them, and able to accurately express the feelings in words. When we lack this awareness, acceptance, or verbal skill, our feelings are likely to be expressed indirectly and ineffectively, as in these "you" statements (adapted partly from Johnson, 1981):

## **Lesson 8**

# **Learning How To State I-Feel Statements**

### **Purpose**

The students will say I-Feel statements in a tactful and straightforward manner.

### **Skill Development**

The students will learn to emphasize and understand I-messages.

They will learn to properly say the 3 part I-feel messages.

Students will learn to be assertive and express their real feelings in a tactful and straightforward way.

### **Materials**

Use activity 8 "I" and "You" Messages handout

### **Introduction (2 minutes)**

1. Inform the students that today they will learn how to say I-Feel statements.
2. Let them know that they will be using "I" messages to express their feelings about how other people treat them.
3. Explain that these messages will be expressed in a way that is tactful and caring, not offending the other person.

### **Procedure (30 minutes)**

1. Students get into their teams.
2. Leader will demonstrate by role practicing with another student or teacher.
3. Students will observe and give their input at the end of the demonstration.
4. Encourage your partner to interrupt, give their input, and change the subject during the role-practicing discussion.
5. Teacher will begin role-practicing by discussing where you plan to go on your vacation. Describe your vacation and give details.
6. Give an example of an assertive I-message and a "you" message.
7. Have the students give their opinions of the 2 illustrations.
8. Have the students to divide into their teams and practice the same role-practice activity.
9. Assist students when needed.

### **Discussion (10 minutes)**

Teams will use the following questions for group discussion.

1. Did you find it difficult to use I-Feel statements?
2. How can you use I-Feel messages to improve your communications with friends or family members?
3. Do your friends or family use "I-Feel" or "You" statements?

### **Instructional Tips**

1. When the students are in their groups to role-practice this activity, have them to use the guideline for "You" and "I" messages. Have students to constantly interrupt their partner as they are speaking.
  - "I" message: "John, I feel frustrated when you interrupt me because I want to tell you about my vacation."

- . **"You" message:** "You are so rude— stop interrupting me, you jerk."
2. During the time of the discussion, have the students to describe the kind of "you" messages they used. Have the students to describe different feelings/emotions their partner responded with when they used "I" and "you" messages.

### **Anticipated Results**

Students feel ready to use I-Feel statements to express their feelings in a tactful, caring, and straightforward way.

### **Homework**

Be honest with others about your feelings by using I-Feel statements in a caring way.

## **Lesson 9**

# **Learning How To Use Assertive Communication**

### **Purpose**

To learn how to stand up to peer pressure by becoming assertive and using I-statements instead of being aggressive and using "you" statements or messages.

### **Skill Development**

Students will learn to stand up and resist negative peer pressure by using assertive I-statements without hurting someone's feelings.

### **Materials**

"Resisting Peer Pressure" handout

"Types of Behavior for Resisting Peer Pressure" handout

Paper and pencils for documentation

### **Introduction (3 minutes)**

1. Tell the students that they will learn about resisting peer pressure by using assertive communication.
2. Explain that they will use assertive communication to stand up for their rights and to voice their own opinions and beliefs. They will also avoid aggressive behaviors such as bullying or offending others.
3. Let them know that in this lesson they will learn to practice assertive communication by using I-Feel statements.

### **Procedure (40 minutes)**

1. Students divide into their groups.
2. Assign a facilitator and a recorder for each team.
3. Have the students to define and to state various ways peer pressure affects them.
4. The recorder of each team is to write definitions given onto their paper.
5. The facilitators are to think of typical situations where they are influenced by peer pressure.
6. Team recorders are to write down these situations.
7. Allow the discussion to continue for 5 minutes. Have the students to choose a topic from their list and discuss various ways they could resist peer pressure.
8. Distribute both handouts on resisting peer pressure.
9. Have the students to compare these approaches with their own thoughts on how to resist negative peer pressure.
10. Leader will role-practice a situation with a student/staff member that has been selected by the student's or you may choose one of your own.
11. The Leader's partner is to approach the Leader, trying to influence him/her to participate in this activity.
12. Leader is to respond by using an assertive statement, such as:  
"No (name of partner) I can't do (name activity) because (say an I-statement telling why you will not participate in this activity)."
12. Leader is to then respond to the same situation by demonstrating an aggressive "you" statement.
13. Have the students to begin role-practicing situations from their list using the assertive "I" and "you" statement techniques.

14. At the end of this activity, have the students comment on their role-practicing by stating the differences between the uses of "I" and "you" statements.
15. You may have students change partners to practice other situations if time allows.

**Instructional Tips**

1. Have the students to compare their ideas of resisting peer pressure with those on the worksheets to decide what may be the best approach before beginning the activity.
2. Explain that passive and passive-aggressive behaviors associate with saying "yes" and giving into negative peer pressure.

**Anticipated Results**

Students learn how to say "no" to negative peer pressure and become secure in their beliefs and are able to use assertive "I" statements.

**Homework**

Stand up for what you believe is right and don't let others have a negative influence on you. Remember that bad companionship corrupts good morals.

## Closing Information

# BEING ASSERTIVE

### T-Chart

Looks like:

- using appropriate body language (e.g., eye contact, confident posture, serious facial expression)

Sounds like:

- using a serious, respectful tone of voice
- using an appropriate volume
- using I-statements
- saying what you won't do, such as "No, I will not accept..."  
"I won't..."

### Role-Play

**Home**—Suppose you are frequently asked to do the dishes but your sister is never asked. Demonstrate how you could express your feelings to your parent in an assertive way.

**School**—Suppose a classmate keeps whispering to you during class, which leads to your getting in trouble. Demonstrate how you could express your feelings to this classmate in an assertive way.

**Community**—Suppose you are next in line to be helped by a sales clerk. Instead of helping you, the clerk continues to help adults who are behind you in line. Demonstrate how you could express your feelings to the clerk in an assertive way.

### Problem Situation

You are afraid to be assertive, because you have always been passive in the past.

### Roadblocks

- having your assertiveness be mistaken for pushiness or rudeness
- feeling uncomfortable about being assertive
- being afraid that people won't like you when you are assertive
- not understanding when to be assertive

### Poster Slogans

- "In assertiveness, style is all-important."—Arnold Lazarus
- Be assertive—use I-statements!



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Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted to say something, but didn't, in order to avoid having a row? Or perhaps you got so angry that you had a violent outburst and regretted it afterwards. These are examples of where assertive communication would have helped.

Lack of assertiveness can affect your relationships and quality of life, as you fail to communicate effectively and end up not getting what you want. Family life, career prospects and stress levels can all be affected by lack of assertiveness.

By looking carefully at how you communicate with others, there are a number of ways in which you can begin to assert yourself, helping to improve your quality of life.

**What is assertiveness?**

Assertiveness is an attitude and a way of relating to the outside world, backed up by a set of skills for effective communication. To be truly assertive, you need to see yourself as being of worth and as having a right to enjoy life. At the same time, you value others equally, respecting their right to an opinion and to enjoy themselves.

This view allows you to engage respectfully with other people, whilst also respecting your own needs. Assertiveness ensures that you are not hurt, used or violated.

At certain times, most people find it difficult to communicate honestly, directly and openly with other people. There are two other main ways of relating to others: being passive or being aggressive.

**Assertiveness involves the following:**

- being clear about what you feel, what you need and how it can be achieved
- being able to communicate calmly without attacking another person
- saying "yes" when you want to, and saying "no" when you mean "no"  
(rather than agreeing to do something just to please someone else)
- deciding on, and sticking to, clear boundaries – being happy to defend your position, even if it provokes conflict

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- being confident about handling conflict if it occurs
- understanding how to negotiate if two people want different outcomes
- being able to talk openly about yourself and being able to listen to others
- having confident, open body language
- being able to give and receive positive and negative feedback
- having a positive, optimistic outlook

### **Passivity**

When someone doesn't know how to express themselves assertively, they tend to resort to passive modes of communication in an attempt to punish or undermine the other person without them knowing the real cause of the behaviour. They may play games, use sarcasm, give in resentfully, or remain silent at their own cost.

### **Aggression**

One of the myths about assertive behaviour is that it involves being aggressive. This isn't true. Assertiveness involves clear, calm thinking and respectful negotiation within a space where each person is entitled to their opinion. Aggression involves bottling up feelings which eventually explode, leaving no room for communication.

While some people think that being assertive is about being selfish, it is in fact the opposite. Assertiveness is about acknowledging all opinions as important. An assertive attitude says "I matter and you do too". Learning how to express yourself assertively can seem daunting at first. But there are many things you can do to learn to become more assertive.

### **Body language**

An important part of assertiveness is open, secure body language. The way that you hold yourself has an impact on how you are perceived and treated. Passive body language would be the classic "victim" stance of hunched shoulders and avoidance of eye contact, while an aggressive stance is one with clenched fists, glaring eyes and intrusive body language.

Assertive people generally stand upright but in a relaxed manner, looking people calmly in the eyes, with open hands. A good first step to becoming more assertive is to consider your own body language through role play.

### **Exercise**

With a friend, or in front of a mirror, try different types of posture and body language as you imagine being the aggressor, the victim and finally an assertive person. Your friend can play the opposite role of passive versus aggressive and so on. Finally, see what it feels like to change from being in a passive/aggressive stance to using assertive body language. Just standing in a confident, calm way can feel empowering.



## Communication

Clear communication is an important part of assertiveness. This is where you show:

- knowledge – you are able to understand and summarise the situation
- feelings – you can explain your feelings about the situation
- needs – you are able to explain clearly what you want or need, giving your reasons and any benefits to the other party

## Assertive communication

It isn't just the content of what you say that counts, it is the way you put it across. It helps to:

- be honest with yourself about your own feelings
- keep calm and stick to the point
- be clear, specific and direct
- if you meet objections, keep repeating your message whilst also listening to the other's point of view. Try to offer alternative solutions if you can
- ask, if you are unsure about something
- if the other person tries to create a diversion, point this out calmly and repeat your message
- use appropriate body language
- always respect the rights and point of view of the other person

## Practising

With a friend, practise being assertive in certain business situations, such as refusing to accept additional work or having to give constructive criticism to a colleague. Explain the scenario to your friend. Using role-play, go through the situation, making your points clearly with your friend responding as the other person.

"I'd be delighted to help you with that piece of work, but we'll need to agree what other current projects you don't want me to do, because I won't have time to do them all."

Afterwards, ask your friend to tell you what went well and where you could make improvements.

Try the situation again. Then swap roles to see the other person's perspective.

Once you have practised being more assertive, think through your new techniques before entering a situation that requires assertiveness. Imagine your body language, work out how to deliver your message clearly. Imagine how you will react to any possible responses.

## Getting help from others

Some people may feel they need additional help to become more

assertive.

### **Assertiveness training**

Your local library will have details of classes and most adult education institutions offer courses in assertiveness training. These groups tend to vary in approach and in the skill of the teacher. It's a good idea to find out how experienced the teacher is beforehand.

### **Counselling/psychotherapy**

If you continually act in a predominantly passive or aggressive way, or if you think past experiences have particularly influenced the way you behave, counselling or psychotherapy sessions may be helpful. A trained practitioner will help you to examine previous experiences. This can lead you to understand why you act as you do, and will help you to think differently about yourself and to adopt positive, assertive behaviour.

### **Conclusion**

Although it can be daunting, the benefits of learning assertiveness are great. Assertiveness allows you to communicate better, command respect, and be listened to within respectful, negotiating relationships.

### **Further information**

#### **Mind**

0845 766 0163  
<http://www.mind.org.uk>

#### **British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)**

01254 875277  
<http://www.babcp.com>

#### **UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)**

020 7436 3002  
<http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk>



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## **What does it mean to be assertive?**

Being able to communicate effectively does not come naturally for most people. Most people need to develop an understanding of themselves and learn assertive skills in order to be assertive. Even people who consider themselves to be assertive have situations or certain relationships in which they find it challenging to be assertive. Even though it takes some time and effort to develop the skills, there is great incentive to learn and practice assertive communication. Interacting with others in an assertive way can have the effect of increased intimacy and more meaningful authentic relationships. Also, behaving and communicating assertively will make it more likely that you get what you want in life.

Assertiveness is about standing up for yourself, believing in your opinions and your right to be heard and getting your needs met. But it is also about respecting the opinions and needs of others. Assertiveness does not mean getting what you want regardless of what other people need or want. It is about valuing yourself and valuing others and believing that you are equal to others – not superior or inferior – and have equal rights to be heard, respected, and to get what you need. Assertiveness is the attitude that “I matter as much as you, and you matter as much as me.” An assertive person stands up for his/her own rights, opinions and needs, but still pays attention to those of other people. Assertiveness is about being neither a doormat nor a steamroller, but rather a respectful and respected person who values his/her own needs as well as those of others.

In addition to reading this section of the website, there are other ways that you can learn assertive communication. The Center for Women & Men has counselors who are happy to talk with you about your specific

situation and also role-play assertive communication with you (please see Counseling and Referral). The Center also provides workshops on Assertiveness and Communication. Please see our Upcoming Events to find out the date of the next workshop. Please also go to the end of this section for other suggestions (please see Where to get more information about assertiveness).

### **Three different styles – passive, aggressive, assertive**

#### *Passive*

A person with a passive interpersonal style may be easily intimidated by others and may believe that his/her rights and opinions are not as important as those of other people. Passive people are often shy and have difficulty saying "no" when asked to do a favor. They also tend to be overly courteous and might do just about anything to avoid a fight, argument or disagreement. The passive person may get angry when someone violates their rights, but they aren't likely to stand up for themselves directly. This may leave them feeling put-upon, taken advantage of, or abused. Passive people may become depressed or anxious because they fear others getting angry with them and feel taken advantage of or used. They may also be well aware of their passive style and become angry with themselves for not being able to stand up for their rights. Some passive people may also become passive-aggressive, that is, they won't stand up to someone directly, but they'll talk about them behind their back or do little things to subtly convey their anger and get revenge. They may be intimidated by authority and have a hard time dealing with people in power. Passive people are at high risk for being used or taken advantage of and may rarely get what they want or need. It is important to note that in some situations in which there is potential danger- it is appropriate to behave passively in order to protect yourself.

### *Aggressive*

Someone with an aggressive interpersonal style behaves very differently than the person with a passive style. The person with the aggressive style believes that their rights, opinions and needs are more important than those of others and they may violate other's rights and boundaries in an effort to get what they want. The aggressive person is essentially sending the message of "I matter more than you do, so get out of my way."

Aggressive people are likely to be demanding, angry, and hostile in getting to their goal and may not realize that they hurt others or violate their rights in the process. People like this may be verbally and/or physically aggressive. Some aggressive people will say that they are just standing up for their rights, but there is a difference between standing up for yourself and walking all over everyone else. Aggressive people are at a higher risk to alienate others through their hostile style or to get into fights and arguments. They also may not get their needs met because they offend others or make others angry which may make others avoid them.

### *Assertive*

The assertive style is the middle ground between being passive and aggressive. The assertive person does not give the message that "You matter more than me" or that "I matter more than you." Instead, they give the message that "We are equals, both of our needs matter, let's find a way to get them both met." The assertive person expresses his/her opinions freely, is not afraid to state his/her requests, and stands up for him/herself when others try to violate his/her rights. But all of this is done in a respectful manner. The assertive person does not demand, but rather asks, does not withdraw, but stands his/her ground. He or she understands that other's feelings, opinions and rights are important, but does not place them either above or below his/her own.

### *An example of the three styles*

It's the beginning of the quarter and Jane is waiting in a long line at the bookstore. Just ahead of her another student, carrying a large load of books, steps into line next to his friend.

*Passive response:* Jane is upset that the other student cut ahead of her, but doesn't say anything because she doesn't want to be rude. Instead, she fumes about it and later tells her friends about this incredibly rude guy at the bookstore.

*Aggressive response:* Jane yells at the guy, "Hey, you jerk! Can't you see there's a line here? What's your problem – do you think you're so special you don't have to wait in line?"

*Assertive response:* Jane speaks to the other student in a firm, but respectful, tone and says, "Excuse me, but there's a long line here. I don't think it's fair for you to cut ahead when the rest of us have been waiting. Could you please go to the end of the line?"

### **The benefits of assertiveness**

Choosing to be assertive has a number of potential benefits. The first, and probably one of the most important, is self-respect. When you behave in an assertive manner you are sending the message to not only other people, but also to yourself, that you believe your rights and needs are important and deserve to be heard. You are sending the message that you are deserving and worthy of respect. It is respecting yourself and your own needs and stating that you matter. At the same time, you are respecting the needs of others and placing yourself in an equal position, rather than a one up or one down position.

Assertiveness is a means to communicating authentically with others. It can foster closer, more intimate relationships with your loved ones.

Being assertive is also helpful in getting what you want and saying what you mean. When you express your needs and opinions in a firm but respectful manner you are communicating openly and honestly to others that what you want matters, but that you respect their opinions and desires as well. People are more likely to respond to you and be willing to listen or help you get what you want when you express yourself in a reasonable and respectful manner than if you demand things or refuse to express your wants at all.

Assertiveness is also useful in defusing conflict situations. When one person is angry and hostile, responding in an angry and hostile manner is likely to cause things to escalate and get even worse. Responding in a calm but firm manner helps to bring things back down to a rational level and help issues get solved – something a name-calling spree rarely results in. However, it is important to remember that you only have control over your own behavior, not that of others. If someone is looking for a fight, or is just an aggressive personality, they may respond aggressively to you no matter what you do. Similarly, if you have always been a passive person and begin to stand up for your rights, people who are used to taking advantage of you may not respond in the way you would like. But the odds are, if you behave in an assertive manner, you are more likely to get what you want than if you are passive or aggressive.

It is important to remember that assertive behavior is not a guarantee. Just because you are calm, firm and respectful does not mean that everyone else will be too. Chances are, though, when you are assertive you are more likely to get what you want than if you are aggressive or passive. However, there are times when other styles are appropriate. For example, if someone is threatening you and you believe you are in physical danger, a passive approach might provide you with a

safer outcome (e.g., a mugger with a gun wants your wallet). On the other hand, aggressive behavior may be necessary to defend yourself. It's up to you to decide what style is the most appropriate for any given situation, but in most interactions, assertiveness is more likely to be effective than passiveness or aggressiveness.

### **Gender differences and assertiveness**

Men and women in our culture have different socialization experiences and are generally encouraged to behave in different ways. Men are encouraged to be independent and strong, they are taught to go for what they want no matter what and to be focused on results. Women, on the other hand, are often encouraged to value relationships and emotions, to take care of others, and to focus on feelings rather than results. These different socialization experiences can lead men to behave in an aggressive way and women to behave more passively, though there are, of course, many differences within men and women. Some men behave passively, some women aggressively, and many men and women have learned to be assertive.

Men who have always been "go-getters" and are willing to strive for what they want no matter what can benefit from learning to respect others needs and to recognize the effects of their behavior on others. By learning to value others wants and opinions as well as their own, aggressive men can learn to be assertive, which can actually help them get their needs met and improve their relationships.

Women who have been taught to always put others ahead of themselves may find it very difficult to stand up for themselves, express their opinions or go for what they want. They often end up behaving in a very passive manner, deferring to others and taking care of others' needs before their own. Passive



women can benefit from assertiveness because it teaches them to value themselves as equal to others and to stand up for their rights as well as taking care of other people. This can help them to get their needs met and to form more meaningful and authentic relationships.

### **Guidelines to being assertive**

What does it take to be assertive?

Assertiveness is essentially about valuing yourself as an equal and standing up for your rights...but that can be a lot harder to do than it sounds, especially if you have a history of being passive and deferring to others or being aggressive and ignoring others needs in favor of your own. Below are some ideas and suggestions to help you in developing assertive behavior.

Think about what you really want: In order to be clear and assertive with others, you need to know what it is that you want. It's very hard for other people to understand what you're asking them if you don't understand it. Think about it – is it that you want your partner to spend more time with you, or that you want him/her to pay attention to you when you are together? Is it that you want your professor to call on you in class, or that you want him/her to listen to your responses when you do speak? Understanding what it is that you want can help you in being precise and specific in stating your needs and in communicating to people what you want.

*Be precise and specific:* In stating your needs or wants, it's helpful to tell others (and yourself) exactly what it is that you're looking for. For example, if you tell your partner "I would like you to ask how my day was when you see me," it's much easier for them to understand what you mean and do what you ask than if you say "I want you to care more about me."

Use "I" statements: When you're expressing your feelings and needs, it's useful to focus on what you think or want. "You" statements, like "You don't care about me," "You never do anything right," or "You really should do a better job," can very easily become angry and blaming, putting the other person on the defensive. In contrast, "I" statements, such as "I need to feel cared for," "I feel like you're not interested in this job," or "I would like it if you would spend more time on this," place the focus on what you think or want, not on what the other person is doing wrong.

Use "Behavior-Effect": An extension of the "I" statement is behavior-effect feedback. Such statements are modeled on the sentence "When you do \_\_\_\_\_, I feel \_\_\_\_\_." These statements make it possible to communicate to the other person what effect their behavior has on you, without getting into blaming. For example, if your roommate never cleans your dorm room, you might say, "When you leave messes in the room, I feel embarrassed to have friends over."

Make clear requests and suggestions: You can then extend the behavior-effect statement to what you would like the other person to do, for example, "I would appreciate it if you would put your things away when you're done with them and do your share of the cleaning." You can then make suggestions of how that might be done, such as "Maybe we could set up a cleaning schedule so that we'll be sure to have the room clean whenever visitors come over."

Use a firm but calm voice tone: Being assertive has to do with communicating in an appropriate voice tone as much as it does with what you say. Speaking in a very low voice or ending every sentence as a question makes you seem passive or not committed to your statement. Speaking too loudly, yelling, or being sarcastic or angry makes you seem aggressive no matter what you're saying, and

can put people off and lead them to feel defensive. But if you speak in a voice tone that is clearly audible, but not yelling, and is firm rather than wimpy or sarcastic, people are much more likely to take both you and what you're saying seriously.

**Avoid demands, blaming, and "shoulds":** When you're expressing your thoughts, feelings or needs assertively, you're communicating to people what you think, what you want, and what you would like them to do. There is no place for name calling, demanding that they behave in a certain way or telling them all the things they've done wrong. Those types of behaviors just make people feel more defensive and angry and make them less likely to listen to you. Even if someone has done something you didn't like or that hurt your feelings, you can communicate that without demanding or blaming. For example, if a friend stood you up at the movies, there's a big difference between saying:

"When you didn't show up to meet me, I felt really hurt and also worried that something might have happened to you. In the future, could you please let me know if you're not going to be able to make it?"

AND

"I can't believe you left me there like that. You are so inconsiderate! What kind of friend are you? Do even care that I stood outside for half an hour waiting for you? What is your problem?"

Although it might release some tension in the moment to rant and rave at the other person, in probably won't help you get your needs met.

**Be factual and avoid exaggerations:** This is part of being precise and specific. It's easier for other people to listen to what you're saying and take you seriously if you stick to the facts. When people are angry they're very likely to use words like "always" and "never." However, it's very rare that anyone "always" or "never" does anything - there

are usually exceptions to any behavior. For example, is it really true that your boss never listens to what you say? Is your partner really always late? When communicating with others, it helps to say exactly what it is that bothers you, rather than letting your anger or hurt feelings lead you to exaggerate.

Clarify rather than assume: If you're not sure about something, ask. It's easier to get what you want if you know the whole story. In the example of the friend who missed the movie, you might want to find out why he/she didn't show up, rather than just assuming that he/she didn't care and stood you up on purpose. Frequently there's information we're unaware of; try to find out what it is before you blame someone.

Take responsibility: In learning to be assertive, it's important to take responsibility for your own feelings and behaviors as well. If you're contributing to a problem, acknowledge it, rather than putting the blame on someone else, and talk to that person about finding a compromise. Remember that no one makes you feel anything, you have feelings about others actions and opinions, but they are your feelings. Own your feelings and when you communicate them, use "I" statements, such as "I feel angry" rather than "You make me so angry."

### **Examples of Assertive Behavior**

Below are some examples of situations in which you might want to be assertive. Read the situation and think about what an assertive response might be. When you've done that, click on the response button and compare your ideas to the responses given. Are you closest to the passive response, the assertive response or the aggressive response? If your ideas fit more with the passive or aggressive response, think about what you might change to be more assertive. If your ideas fit the assertive response, good

job! But, are you applying your knowledge of assertiveness to real life? If not, think about how you might change your behavior so that you can act on the knowledge that you have. If you are, keep up the good work and share your skills with others around you!

*Situation 1: Assertiveness at Work*

You try very hard to get to work on time, but one of your co-workers, Angela, is frequently late. Angela expects you to cover for her with the boss, Miriam, so that she won't get in trouble. In the past two weeks, Angela has been late for work five times and you've had to cover for her. You're getting really frustrated with the situation and angry with Angela. What do you do?

RESPONSE

*Situation 2: Assertiveness at School*

You have a group project to do for a class that you really like. The professor is one you're hoping to work with and you want to impress him. The other people in your group, however, are not as interested in the class and just aren't putting in the effort on the project that you'd like. You have to turn in the paper in two weeks and you're getting really worried about whether or not it will be done on time and how good it will be. What do you do?

RESPONSE

*Situation 3: Assertiveness with family*

It's the end of the quarter and you're really busy and stressed out. You get a call from your mother telling you that she and your younger sister are coming into town on Thursday because your sister is thinking about applying to UCLA. She wants to you to meet them for dinner on Thursday and then show your sister around campus on Friday. You'd like to, but you have a big exam Friday morning and a paper due on Monday and don't know if you have the time to spend with your family. What do you do?

RESPONSE

*Situation 4: Assertiveness with friends*

Your friend Peter borrowed one of your favorite books three months ago. You know he's finished reading it and you'd really like to have it back. You've asked him twice to return it and he said he would, but he still hasn't brought it back. What do you do?

RESPONSE

*Situation 5: Assertiveness and dating*

You've been out on three dates with Jamie and though you think Jamie is very nice, you're just not interested. Jamie, on the other hand, seems to be very interested and keeps calling you, asking you to go out again. You really don't want to, but you don't want to hurt Jamie's feelings either. What do you do?

RESPONSE

*Situation 6: Assertiveness and protecting yourself*

You're out on a date with someone new. You've had a great time with this person and really enjoyed the evening and are thinking that you'd like to see him/her again. Your date invites you back to his/her apartment to show you a picture he/she was telling you about at dinner. You're a little nervous about going there alone, but figure it'll probably be all right, and besides, you really like this person and they seem very trustworthy. When you get to your date's apartment everything seems fine at first, you keep talking and he/she shows you the picture. Then your date kisses you, which you feel comfortable with, but when he/she tries to take off your shirt, you get uncomfortable, because you really don't want to have sex yet with this person. You try to move away, but your date holds on to you, trying to get you to stay. What do you do?

RESPONSE

*Situation 1: Assertiveness at work*

Passive Response: Although you don't like it that Angela is using you as a cover for being late, you really don't feel there's anything you can do. You'd like her to stop using you, but you assume that if you talk to her about

it, she'll just get mad and try to get you in trouble with the boss. You swallow your anger and steam in private or tell your friends how horrible Angela is, but you don't address the situation directly with Angela.

**Aggressive Response:** The next time Angela's late to work, you really let her have it. You yell at her and tell her she's irresponsible and inconsiderate and you think she should be fired. You tell her if she's ever late again, you'll tell the boss and get her fired.

**Assertive Response:** The next time you see Angela you ask if you can talk with her for a minute. You tell her that although you understand it's hard to get to work on time, you're feeling used and annoyed because she expects you to cover for her. You tell her that you can't cover for her anymore and that you'd appreciate it if she could either be on time to work or find some other way to deal with her lateness.

BACK TO SITUATION 1

### *Situation 2: Assertiveness at school*

**Passive Response:** You try to do as much of the work on the project by yourself as you can. You stay up late at night working on it, but don't say anything to your group members, though you're snappish and unpleasant to them when you do see them. When you turn in the project you tell the professor that you did all the work and your group members really slacked off, but you don't say anything to them (passive-aggressive response).

**Aggressive Response:** You send all of your group members a nasty email telling them that they're lazy and slacking off and you're tired of doing all the work because this class is really important to you. You tell them that if they don't get their butts in gear and do their share of the project, you're going to go to the professor and make sure they fail the class.

**Assertive Response:** Next time you meet with your group you tell them that this class is very important to you and you want to get a good grade. You communicate that you feel

you've been doing more than your fair share of the work and that you need for them to do their parts of the project.

BACK TO SITUATION 2

*Situation 3: Assertiveness with family*

**Passive Response:** You don't say anything to your mother about all the work you have to do and just agree to meet them for dinner and take your sister around campus the next day. You're really worried and anxious about your test and your paper though, and are withdrawn at dinner and snappish with your sister the next day.

**Aggressive Response:** When you talk to your mother you get angry with her and yell at her about all the work you have to do and how could she possibly expect you to drag your little sister around campus. You tell her she just doesn't understand what you're going through at school and if she really did she wouldn't be so unreasonable putting more pressure on you.

**Assertive Response:** When you talk to your mother you tell her that you'd really like to spend time with her and your little sister, but you have a big test on Friday and a paper due on Monday. You ask her if they could come up the next weekend to look at the campus, when you'll have more free time. If they can't, you make plans to meet for a short dinner Thursday night before you go back to studying and decide that your mother and sister will walk around on campus without you on Friday. You offer to take your sister on a personal tour on another weekend.

BACK TO SITUATION 3

*Situation 4: Assertiveness with friends*

**Passive Response:** You're upset with Peter, but don't say anything to him because you don't want to hurt his feelings or get him angry with you. You figure you can always buy another copy of the book.

**Aggressive Response:** You start bad-mouthing Peter to all of your friends and the next time you see him you present him



with a bill for the book and tell him what an inconsiderate jerk he is.

**Assertive Response:** The next time you see Peter you tell him that you really need to have your book back. You say that you're beginning to feel angry that he says he'll return it but then doesn't bring it in to you. You ask him if it would be easier if you came by his place to pick it up.

BACK TO SITUATION 4

#### *Situation 5: Assertiveness and dating*

**Passive Response:** You screen your phone calls and don't answer the phone when Jamie calls. You never return the calls and avoid Jamie whenever you see him/her on campus.

**Aggressive Response:** The next time Jamie calls you give it to him/her straight. You tell Jamie that you're just not interested, and you're sick of him/her calling all the time and being such a pathetic wimp. You tell Jamie that it shouldn't be that hard to recognize when someone's not interested and he/she should just stop calling and leave you alone.

**Assertive Response:** You call Jamie and tell him/her that although you think he/she's a nice person and a lot of fun to be around, you just think that you are a good match and you don't want to continue dating.

BACK TO SITUATION 5

#### *Situation 6: Assertiveness and Protecting Yourself*

**Passive Response:** You don't want to have sex with your date, but you also don't want to hurt his/her feelings, so you let him/her touch you, even though you feel uncomfortable with it. After a while, you say that you really have to go and leave; you avoid this person from then on.

**Aggressive Response:** You yell "No!," shove your date off of you and run out of the apartment. (Note: this could be a perfectly appropriate response if your date is trying to sexually assault you. Please see the sections on Sexual Violence and Self-Defense for more information.)

**Assertive Response:** You say, in a firm and

clear voice, "Please stop touching me and move away from me. I like you and want to continue to see you, but I'm not ready to go farther than kissing."

BACK TO SITUATION 6

### **Where to get more information about assertiveness**

As was stated previously, becoming assertive requires learning skills as well as getting to know yourself. There are many ways to achieve these goals on the UCLA campus. The Center for Women & Men has counselors who are happy to talk with you about your specific situation and also role-play assertive communication with you (please see Counseling and Referral). The counselors can also provide recommendations for good books that are helpful in the road to becoming assertive. The Center also provides workshops on Assertiveness and Communication. Please see our *Upcoming Events* to find out the date of the next workshop.

UCLA also has a Health Education Department through the Arthur Ashe Student Health and Wellness Center that is designed for the growth and development of students. They provide 'Life Skills' classes (for academic credit), which assist students in their own interpersonal and personal development. Communication and assertiveness are discussed in these courses. For more information please go to the Arthur Ashe Student Health and Wellness website and click on *Health Promotion*.

Some of the information from this section was compiled from the following websites:  
<http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/Brochures/assertiv.htm>  
<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap13/chap13e.htm>  
<http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/language.shtml>  
<http://www.tufts.edu/hr/tips/assert.html>  
<http://www.theoaktree.com/assrtquz.htm>

**Area 2: Talking with People**

**Activity: Two Ears, One Mouth**

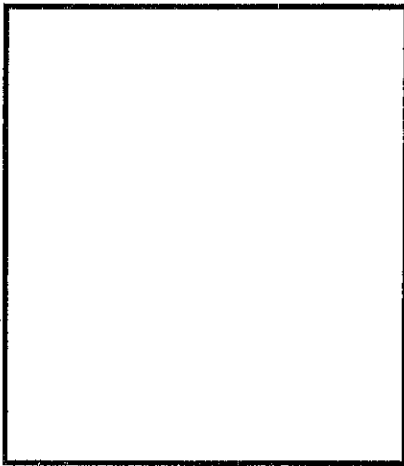
**Objective:** To learn that listening is an important social skill.

.....

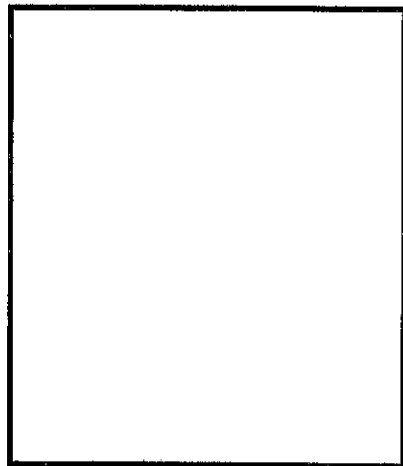
Listening to others when they are speaking is a sign of respect and caring. However, sometimes it is hard to really pay attention to what others are saying. And, at other times, it is difficult not to interrupt others when they are talking.

When you look in the mirror, you see that you have two ears and only one mouth. Let this remind you that, when you are making friends, it is twice as important to listen as it is to talk.

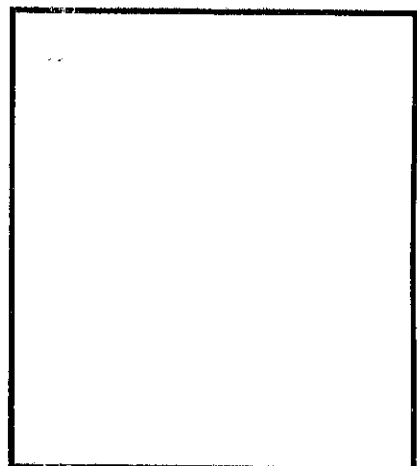
Unscramble the words below, and draw a picture of the word in the frame above it. Does everyone have two ears and one mouth? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_



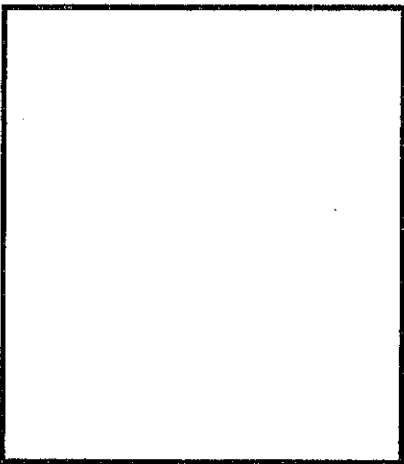
**gpi**



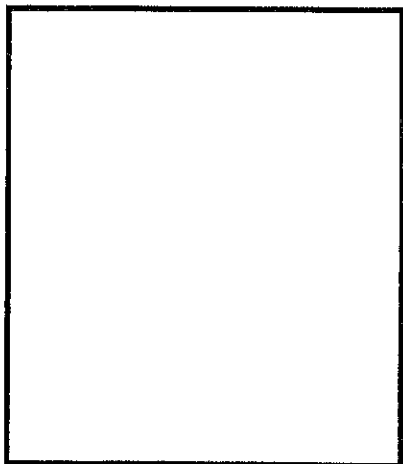
**mmo**



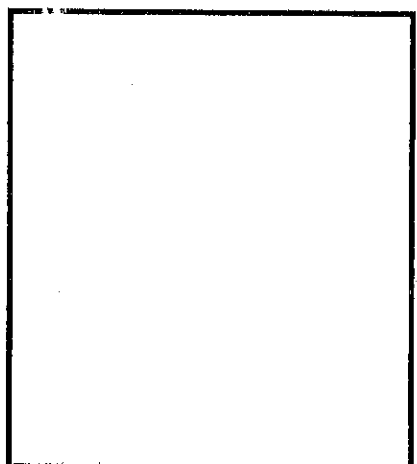
**tca**



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**kyenom**



**etchera**

## Area 2: Talking with People

### Activity: A Winning Team

Objective: To learn listening behaviors.

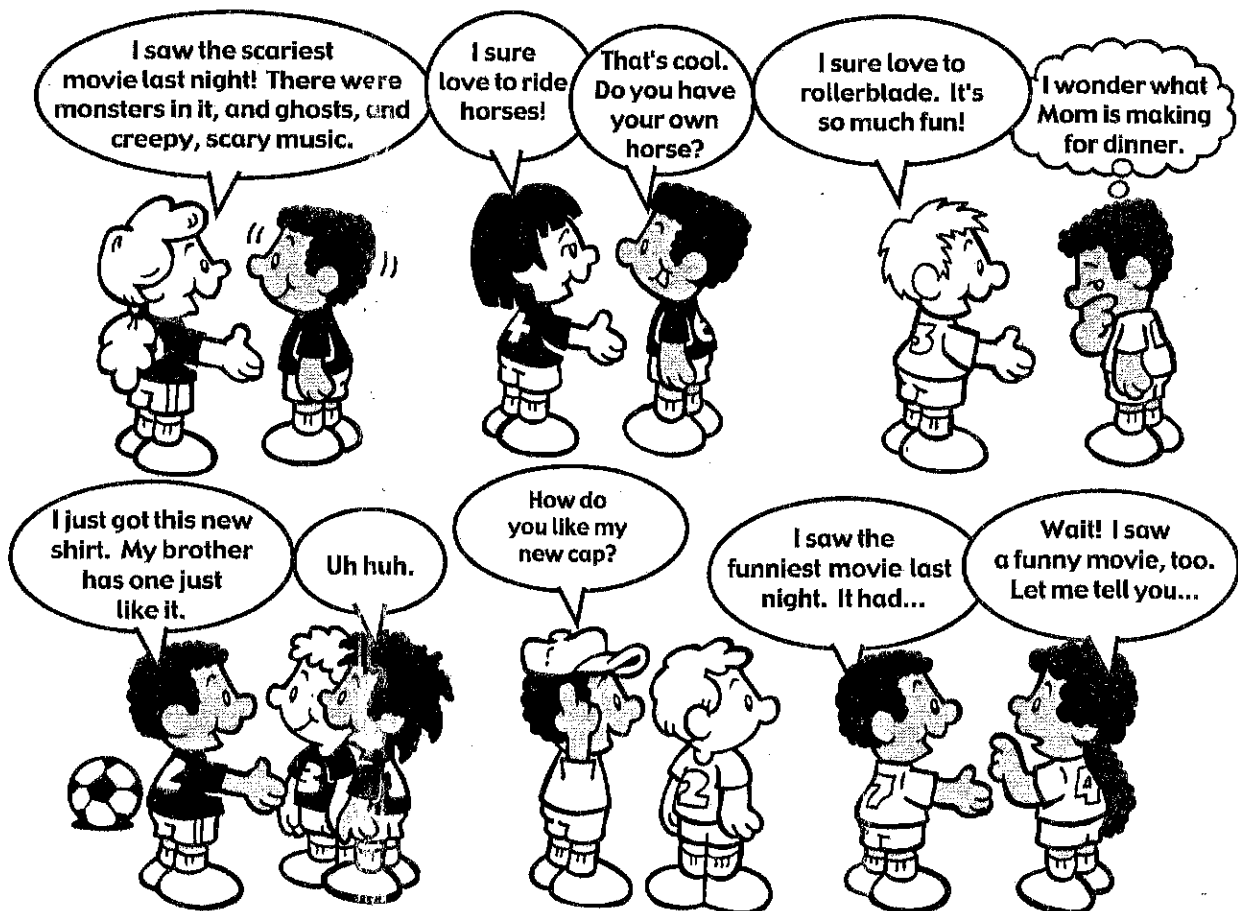
.....

When you use good listening skills, other people feel you are interested in what they have to say. They will want to be with you more because they know you care about their feelings and opinions.

A good listener is one who exhibits the following behaviors:

- Makes eye contact with the speaker
- Doesn't interrupt
- Acknowledges she is listening by saying "Oh," "I see," and "Uh huh"
- Nods occasionally, indicating she understands what the speaker is saying
- Asks questions about what the speaker has said

Two teams are competing to win a social skills game. The team in the black uniform is winning because its members are using good listening skills. The team in the white uniform is losing because its members are using poor listening skills. Pretend you have been called in to coach the White Team. It is half time, and the team needs your help. On the chalkboard on the next page, write down some behavioral changes the White Team could make to become better listeners and score more points.



## Area 2: Talking with People

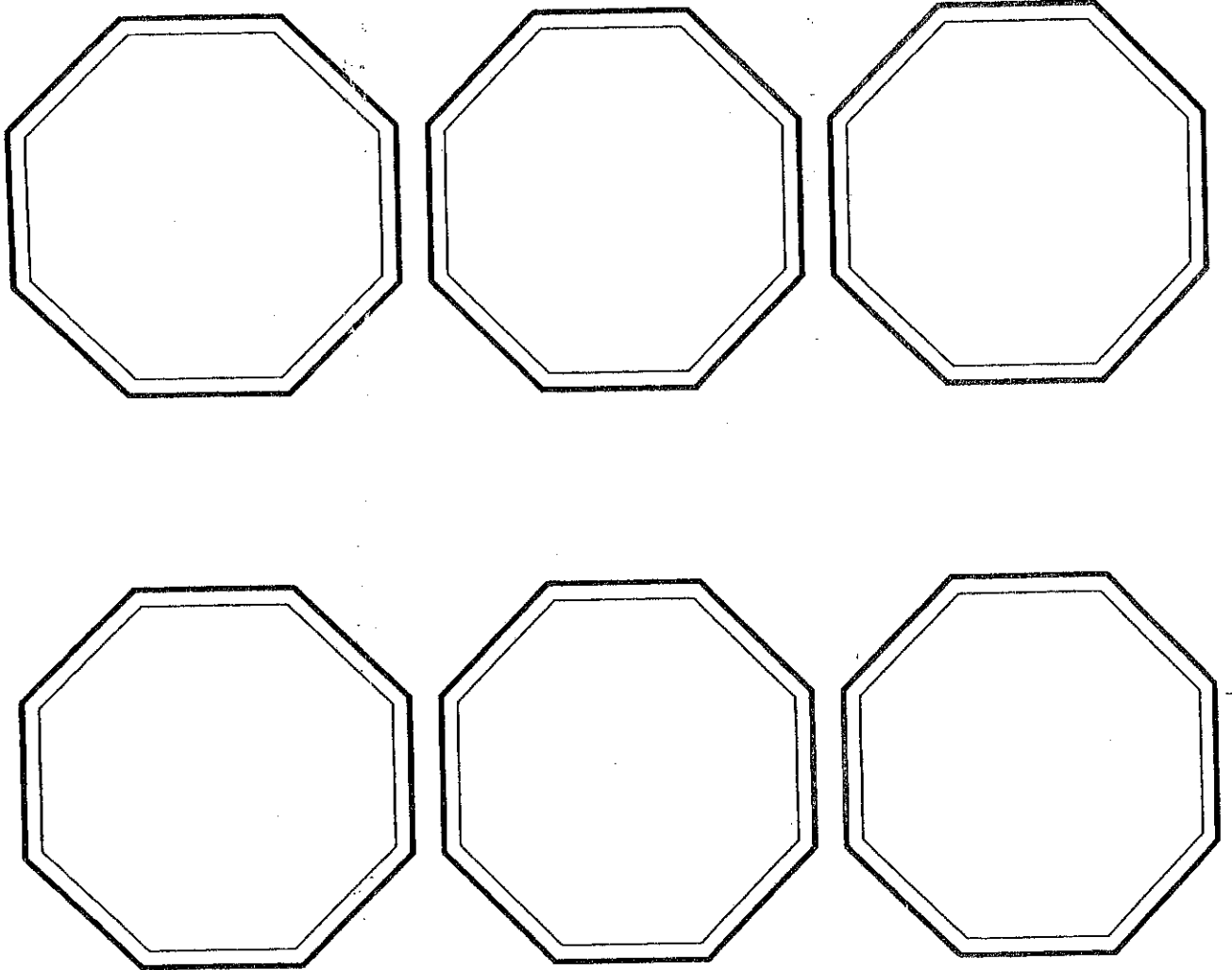
### Activity: Stop the Complaining

Objective: To teach the value of a positive attitude and the difference between positive statements and complaints.

.....

Everyone complains once in awhile, but no one likes to listen to someone who complains all the time. It is more fun to be with people who look on the positive side of things.

Help stop the complaining! Color the octagons red and cut them out. Then read the sentences on the next page and decide which are positive statements and which are complaints. Glue or tape the octagons over the complaints. Write the word STOP on the octagons to make them look like STOP signs.



**I feel good.**

**This ice  
cream  
tastes  
great.**

**I hate  
Mondays.**

**Skating is  
fun.**

**We never  
do things  
my way.**

**The game  
is so  
boring.**

**Even if it's  
raining, we  
can still  
have fun.**

**There's  
nothing to  
do at  
Grandma's  
house.**

**Exercising  
is a waste  
of time.**

**You are  
my best  
friend.**

**I like  
reading.**

**My  
brother is  
a brat.**

## Area 2: Talking with People

Activity: Showing Interest

Objective: To learn how to show interest in other people.

.....

It is not always easy to convey the message that you are interested in other people. Sometimes you are worried about something or you have a lot to do and feel stressed. But if you practice and learn just a few skills now, you will be able to show interest in others at any time. When you are talking with someone in a friendly and polite manner, you are showing interest in what they are saying.

Read the words and phrases in each of the basketballs below. If you think that saying the statement in a particular basketball would "score you points" as a friendly person, draw a line from that basketball to the basketball hoop. If you think that saying the statement would "lose you points" as a friendly person, put an X over that basketball.

Listen carefully.

Talk only about yourself.

Smile and nod to show you are interested.

Look at the person who is talking.

Look the other way when someone is talking to you.

Interrupt when someone else is talking.

Ask a question.

### Area 3: Understanding People

#### Activity: Galaxy of Feelings

Objective: To identify a variety of feelings.

Human beings experience many feelings over the course of a lifetime, and even over the course of a day. The most common feelings are happy, sad, angry and scared. However, we experience many more feelings than these four.

Pretend you are an astronaut. You have been asked to travel to the Galaxy of Feelings and give names to all the stars. Your backpack is stuffed with feeling names. Choose one feeling name for each star below. Match the feelings to the expressions on the faces of the stars, and write in the feeling names on the lines provided.

The central illustration shows an astronaut in a space suit floating in space, surrounded by stars and planets. The astronaut is holding a large backpack filled with rectangular cards, each labeled with a feeling name. The cards include: happy, lonely, bored, angry, excited, silly, loving, tired, stressed, scared, sad, brave, embarrassed, surprised, and guilty. Surrounding the astronaut are 18 cartoon stars, each with a unique facial expression representing a different emotion. Each star has a horizontal line below it for labeling.



### Area 3: Understanding People

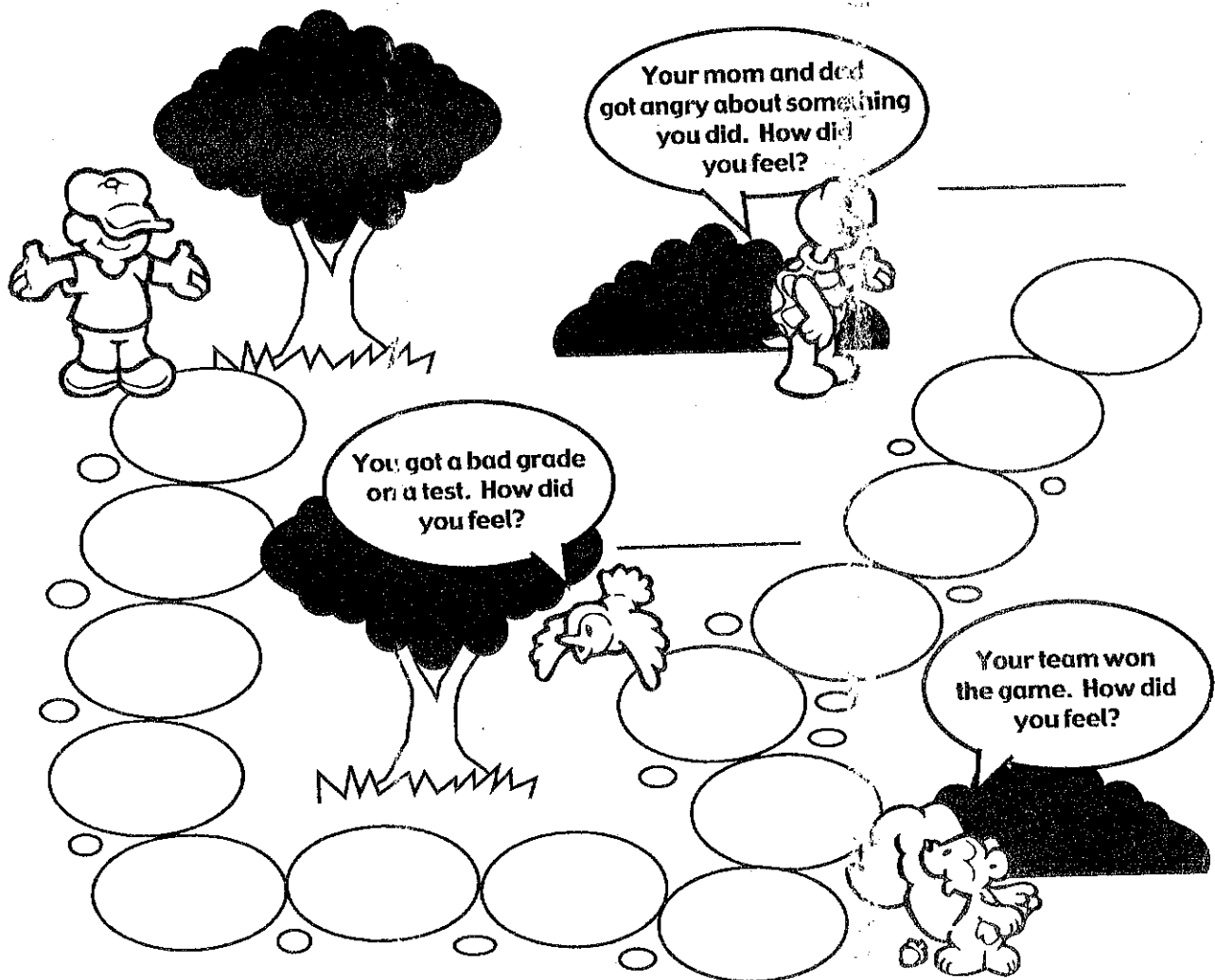
#### Activity: The Feelings Forest

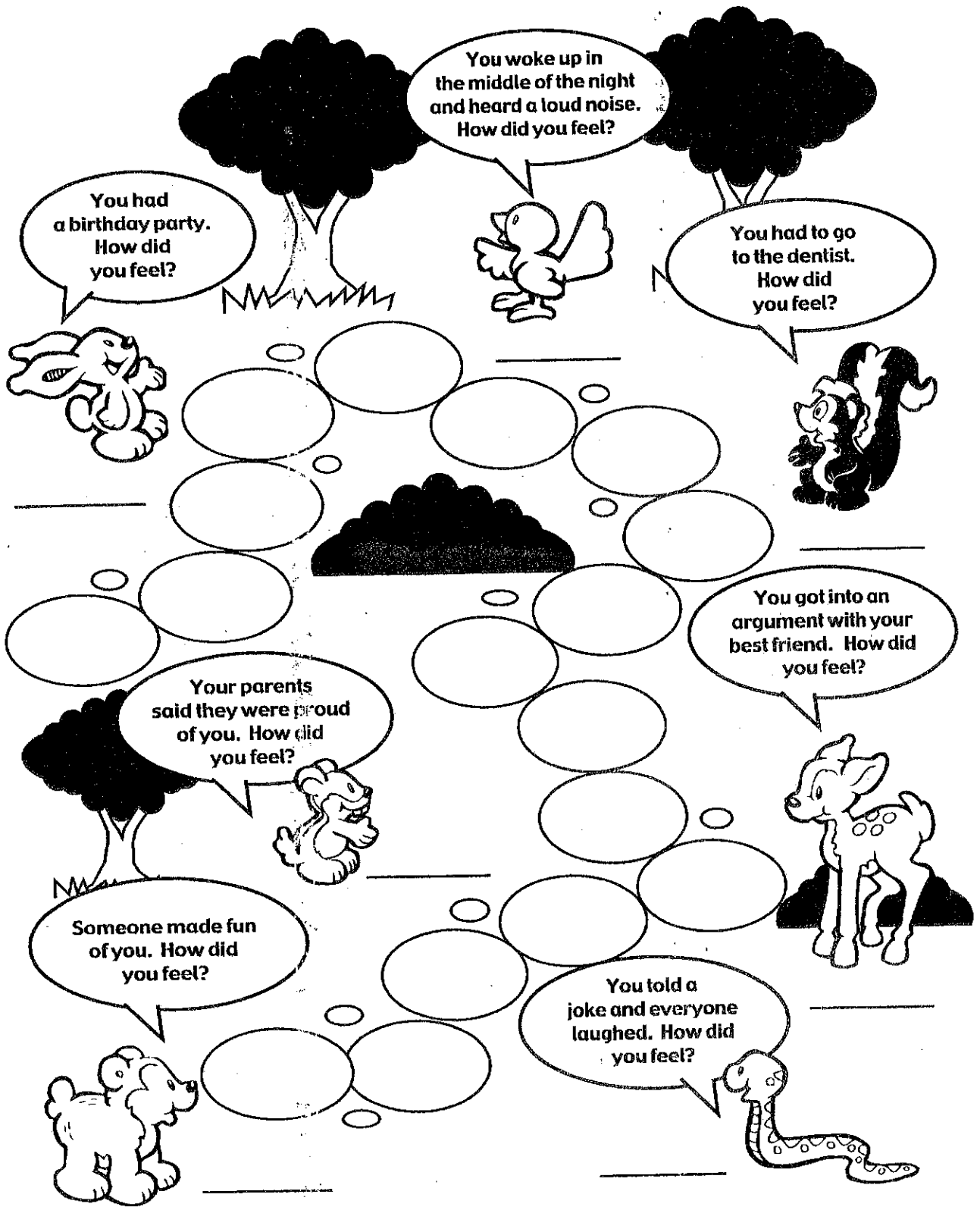
Objective: To become aware of and identify my feelings.

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Sometimes we are so busy with school, friends, family and after-school activities, we don't take the time to know what we are feeling. When we are not in touch with our feelings, we may have a difficult time getting along with others. We need to ask ourselves the following question many times throughout the day: What am I feeling right now?

Take a walk through The Feelings Forest by drawing a line along the path. You will meet many different creatures in the forest who will describe situations that might have happened to you. If the situation did happen to you, tell the creature about it. In the space provided, write the name of your feeling (happy, sad, angry, scared, etc.) and describe how you felt at the time.





You woke up in the middle of the night and heard a loud noise. How did you feel?

You had a birthday party. How did you feel?

You had to go to the dentist. How did you feel?

Your parents said they were proud of you. How did you feel?

You got into an argument with your best friend. How did you feel?

Someone made fun of you. How did you feel?

You told a joke and everyone laughed. How did you feel?

### Area 3: Understanding People

#### Activity: The Feelings Detective

Objective: To recognize signs of other people's feelings.

.....

If you observe carefully, you can tell how people are feeling by the way their faces and bodies look. Once you know how they feel, you can decide the best way to act toward them.

Pretend you are The Feelings Detective. Look carefully at the pictures below to gather clues about what each child is feeling. Write the clues you find in the spaces next to their pictures. Write what you think they are feeling on the lines below their pictures.



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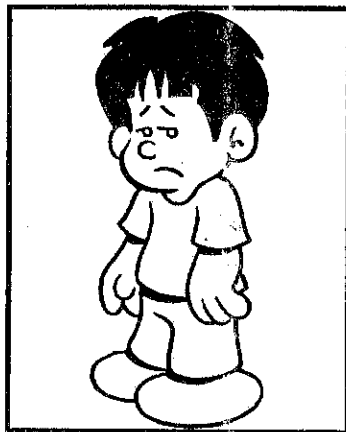


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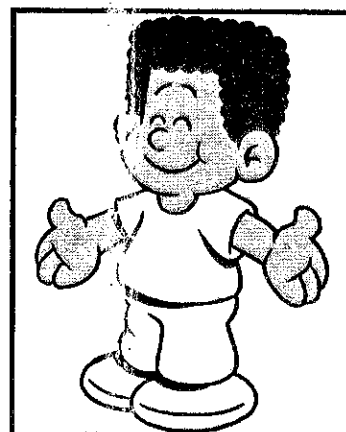


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### Area 3: Understanding People

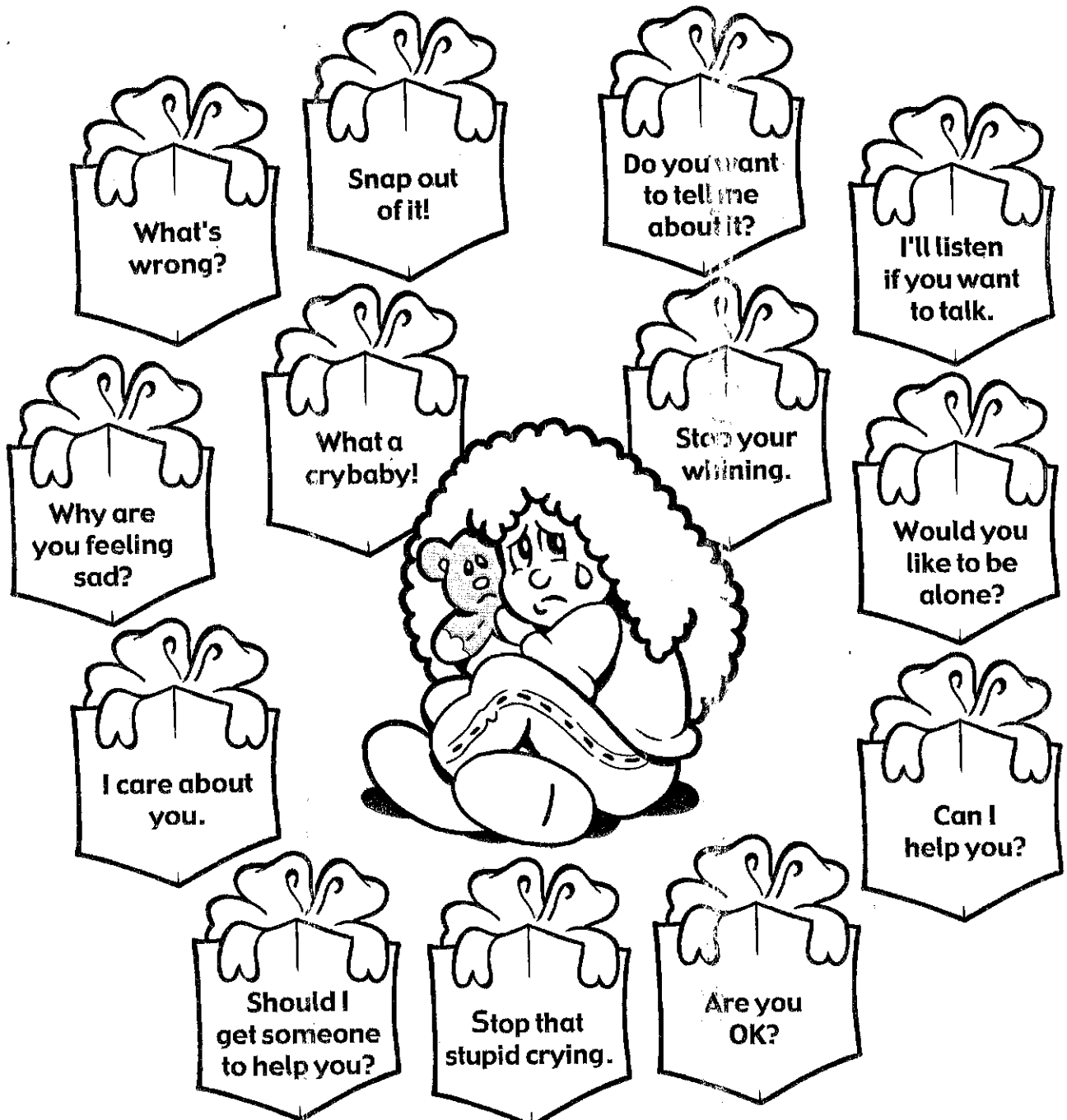
Activity: Caring Words

Objective: To identify words that show caring.

.....

One of the best presents you can give someone is to say you care about her. No material gift can ever do what a show of concern does. Kind words are priceless gifts that are usually appreciated far more than anything that can be bought in a store.

Below is a picture of Susan who is feeling very sad. You want to give Susan gifts to make her feel better. Both caring and non-caring words and phrases are written in the gifts that surround her. Color those gifts that would show Susan you care about her.



### Area 3: Understanding People

Activity: Caring Gestures

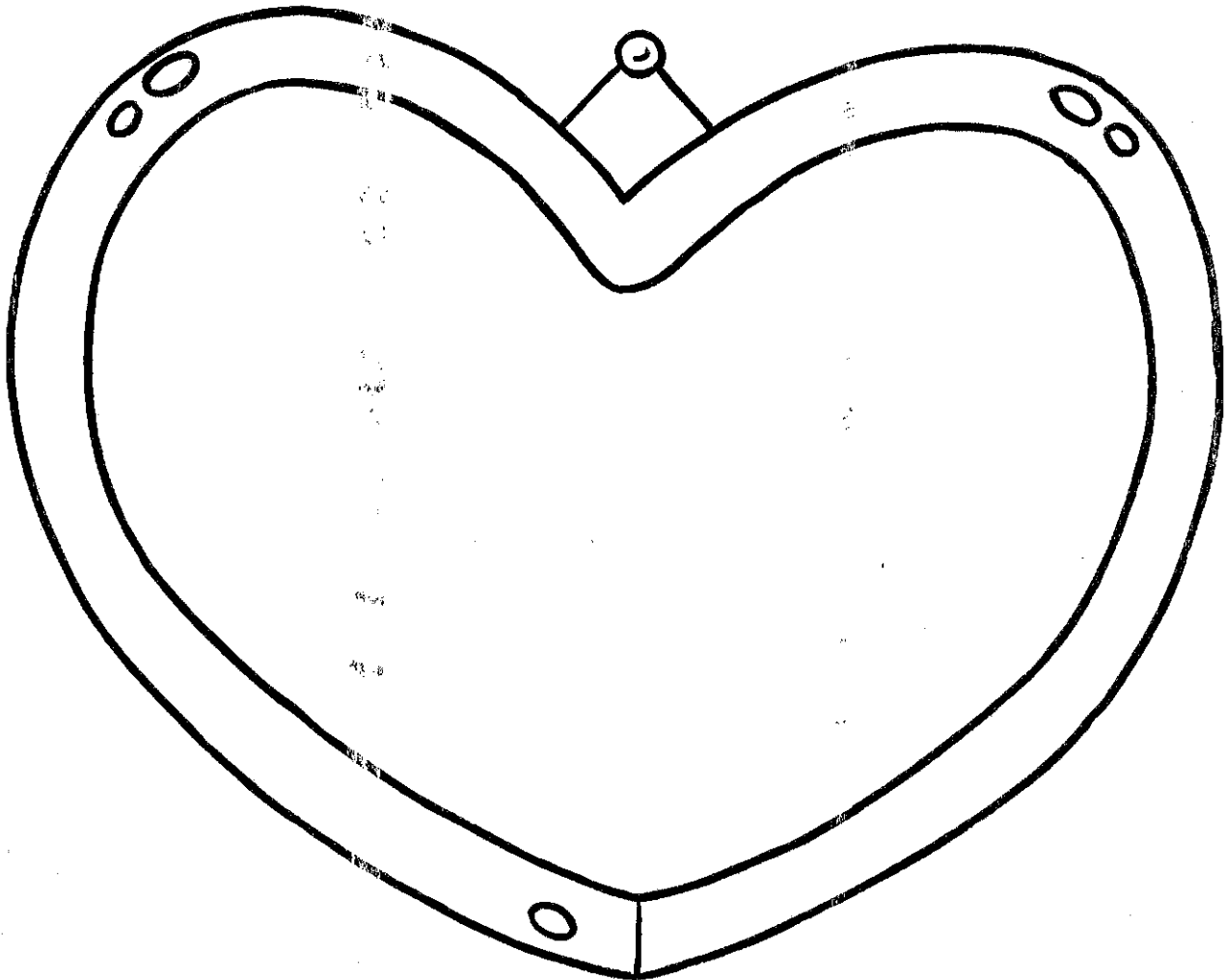
Objective: To identify actions that show caring.

.....

People's actions show how they care about the people in their lives. Their actions can tell others if they are kind and loving or mean and thoughtless. Talking, listening, sharing, and smiling are ways others tell us they want to be our friend. Hugging us, holding our hand, and helping us when we need it are ways people show they care about us.

Look through a magazine for photographs of people showing that they care for one another. Cut them out and glue or tape them in The Caring Frame below.

## The Caring Frame



### Area 3: Understanding People

**Activity:** Someone to Listen to Us

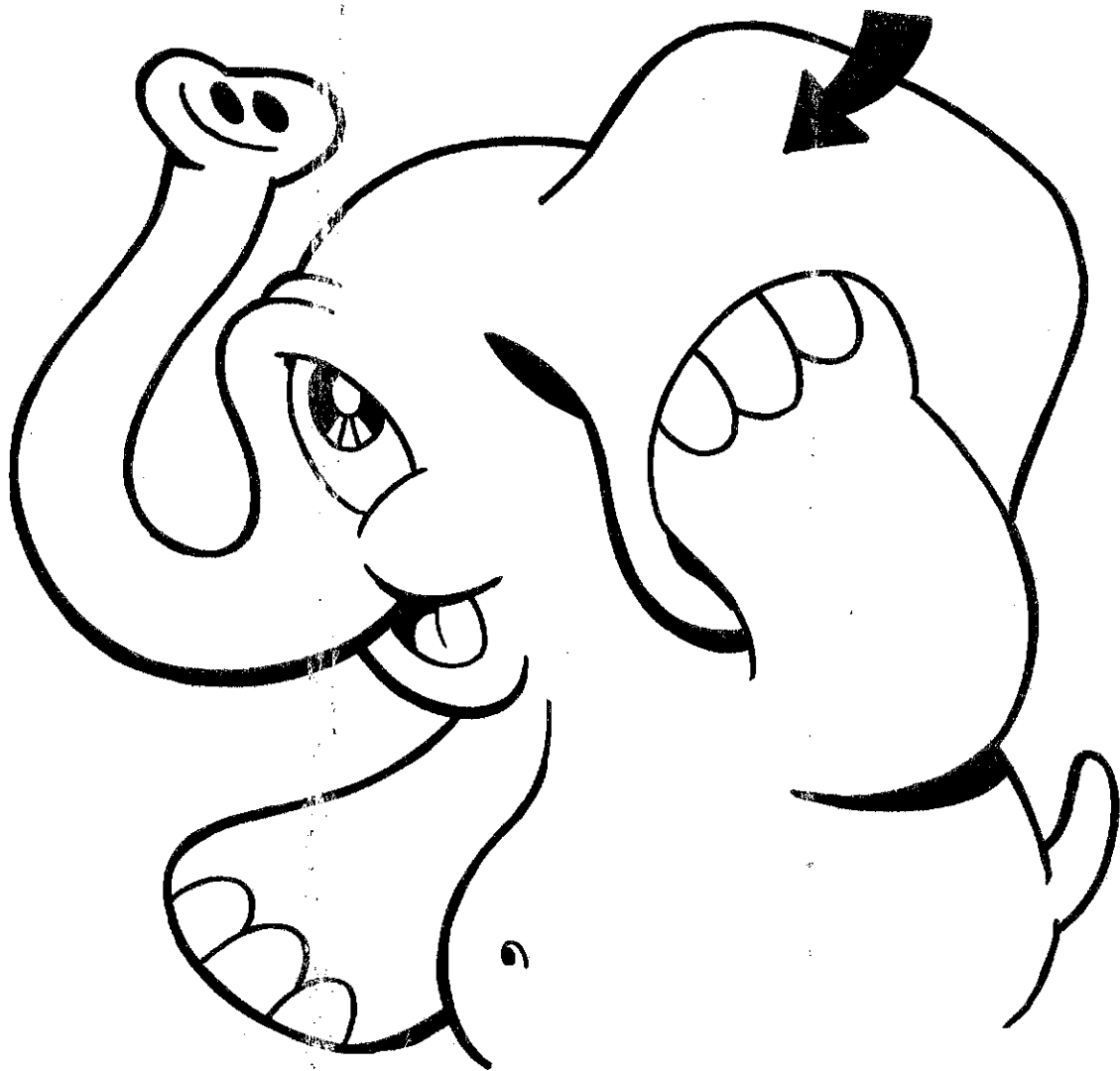
**Objective:** To teach the value of listening as a caring gesture.

.....

Carefully listening to others is one of the best ways to show you care about them. It takes time and patience to really listen. Good listeners make great friends. People who develop listening skills almost always make a lot of friends, many of whom become lifelong pals.

Eddie the Elephant is a great listener. Pretend the situations below are happening to you. Whisper into Eddie's ear, telling him how you feel about each situation and what your thoughts are.

- You got a new puppy.
- You failed a science test.
- You fell off the playground equipment and broke your arm.
- Your little brother lost all the pieces to your new game.
- You just got back from vacation.
- You scored the winning goal for your team.



### Area 3: Understanding People

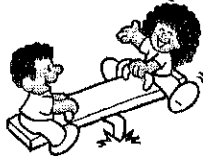
Activity: Time Alone

Objective: To understand that sometimes the best way to help people is to let them have some time alone.

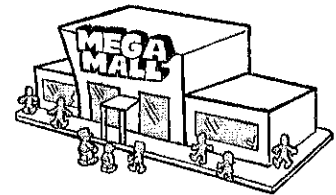
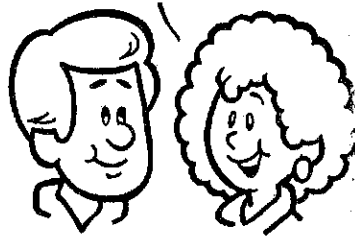
.....

Sometimes when we are upset, it helps to talk with or to be with other people. But sometimes we just need a little time by ourselves to be quiet or to rest. Sometimes we don't want to have to talk to or to be with anyone else.

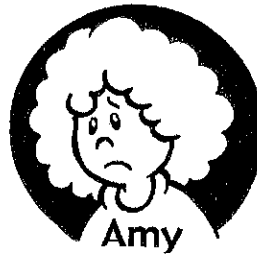
Amy is feeling sad because her favorite hamster just died. Everyone wants to help Amy feel better. Her friends ask her to come out and play. Her brother wants her to watch the goldfish with him. Her parents want to take her to the zoo. But Amy doesn't want to do any of these things. She just wants to be alone for a while. Color the pictures below. Then draw a line from Amy to the places she could go to be alone.



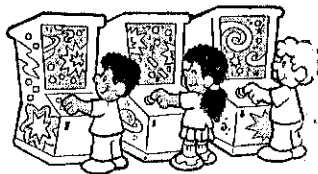
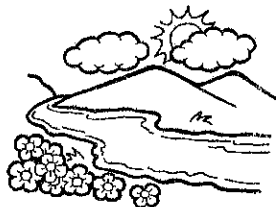
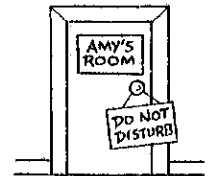
WANT TO GO TO THE ZOO?



AMY, COME WATCH MY GOLDFISH!



COME OUTSIDE AND PLAY!



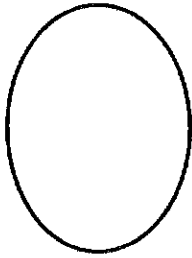
### Area 3: Understanding People

Activity: Act and Feel

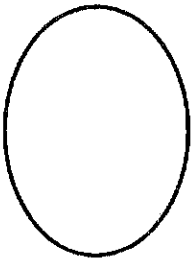
Objective: To understand how my behavior affects others.

.....

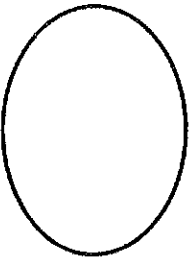
Fill in the faces in the left column so they look like you. Pretend you have a friend named Billy, and you act toward him as described in the middle column. How does Billy feel when you do these things? Fill in Billy's expression on the faces in the right column to show how he feels when you act this way toward him.



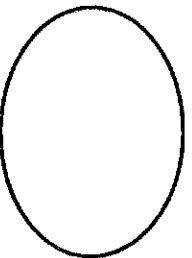
1. You share your toys with Billy.



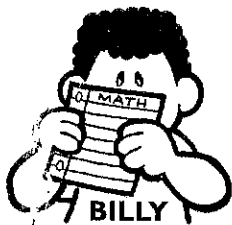
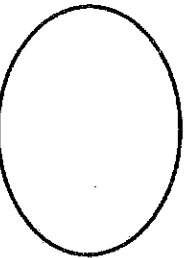
2. You break Billy's action figure.



3. You laugh at Billy when he falls off his bike.



4. You push Billy into the pool.



5. You help Billy study.





## Area 5: Solving Problems with People

### Activity: Meet Me in the Middle


Objective: To practice identifying ways to compromise.

.....


When you compromise with someone, you "meet in the middle." Neither one of you may get exactly what you want; but, if you each give in a little, you will both get something, if not all, you want.

The pictures below show several sets of friends who want to do something together, but they are disagreeing about what to do. As long as the friends disagree, they cannot do anything. Help them meet in the middle by thinking of ways for them to reach a compromise. Write your solutions halfway between both friends.

I want to play with dolls!




**Compromise**




I want to play with trucks!

I want to ride in the front seat when we go to the library!




**Compromise**




I want to ride in the front seat when we go to the library!

I want to go swimming!



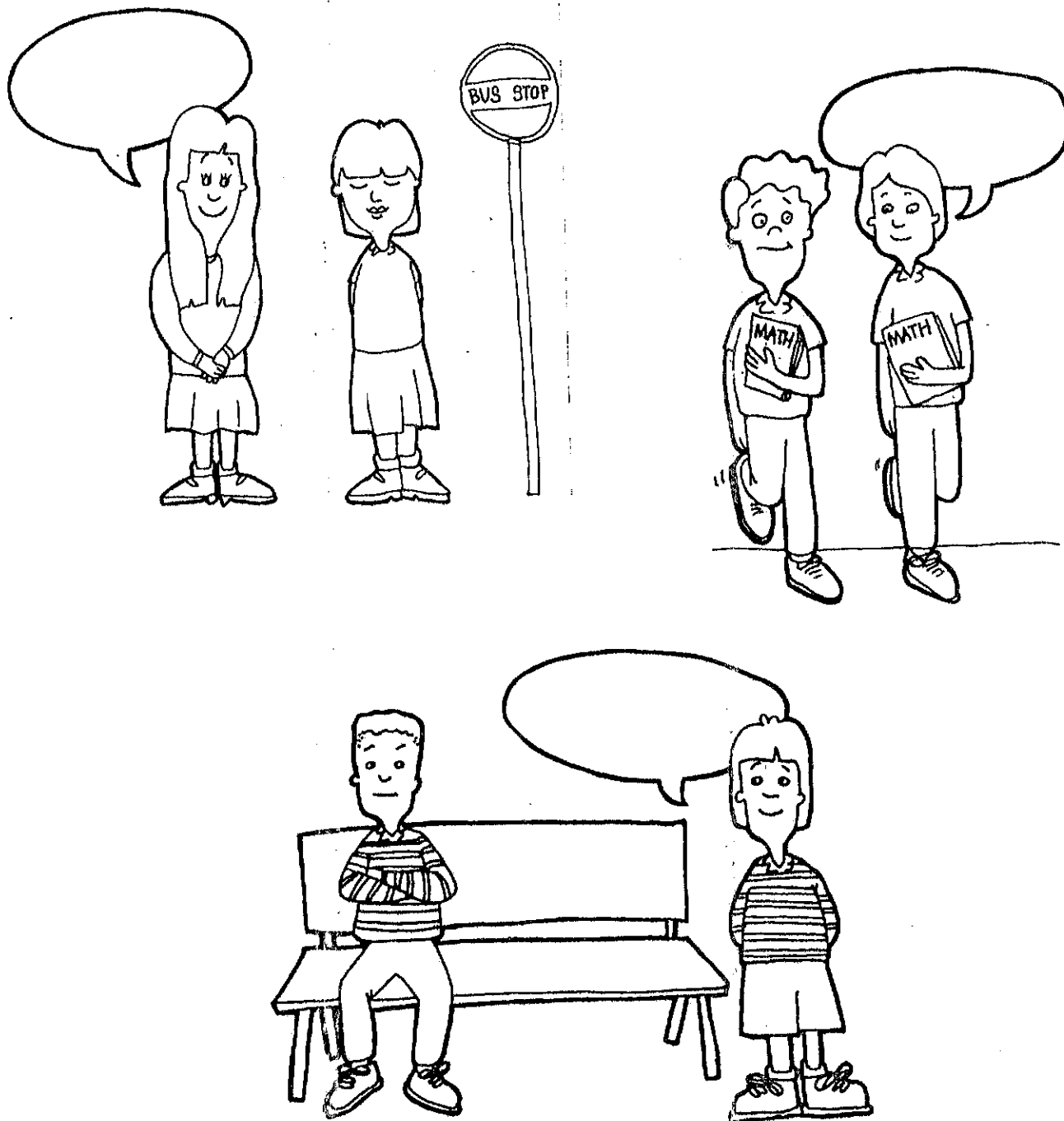
**Compromise**



I want to go out in the boat!

# Starting a Conversation

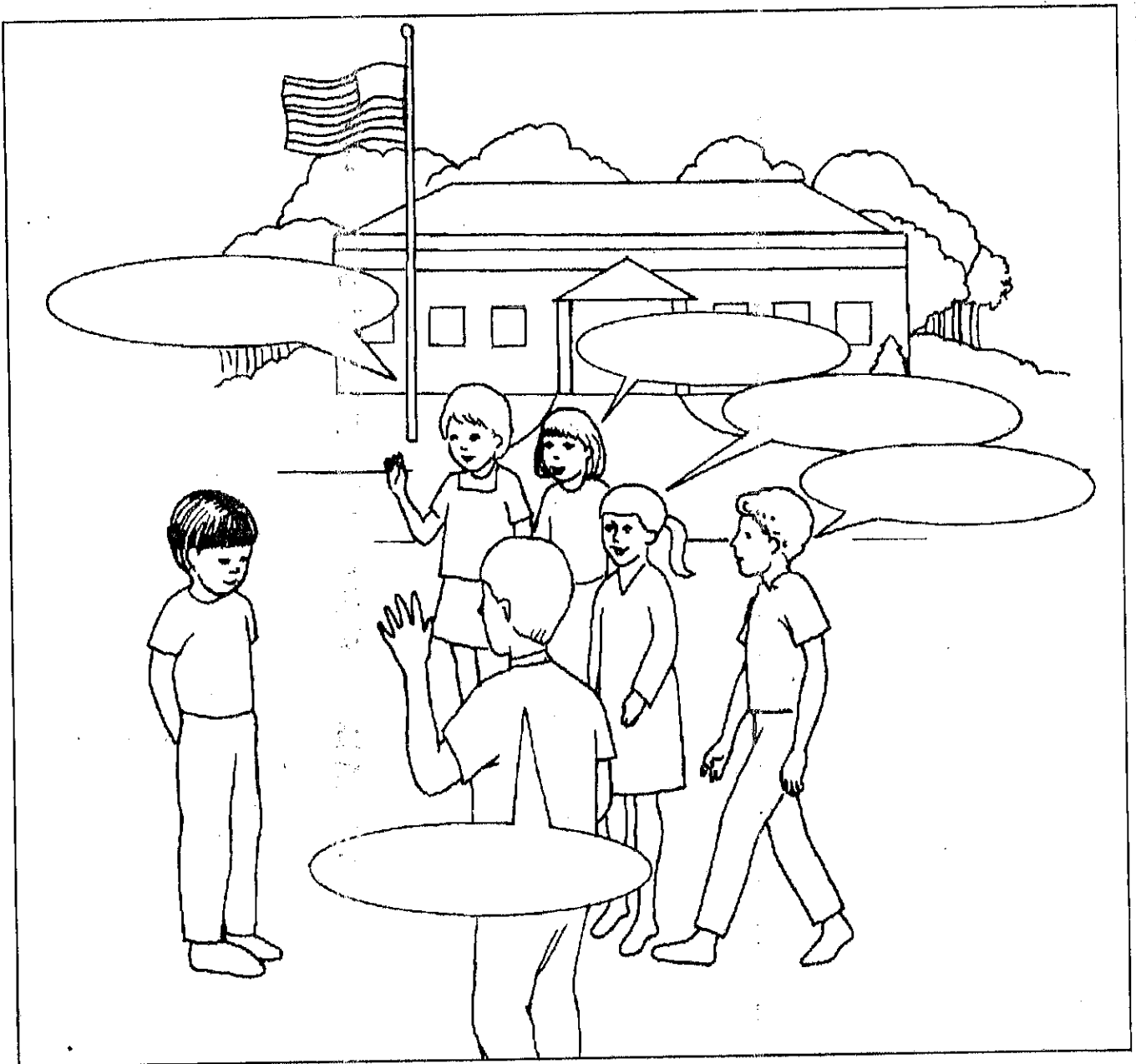
The children in these pictures have something in common. Fill in the speech balloons with some words that could draw the other person into a conversation.



# Making New Friends

All through life you will meet new people and have the chance to make new friends. But what are good ways to make new friends? Johnny just arrived from another country and started school at Maple Elementary.

These five children are each saying something that will make Johnny feel better about his first day of school. Can you think about what each one might be saying? Fill in the balloons in this picture.



maintain and to improve your relationship with your parents. It can be hard work at times, but if you are serious and committed, your efforts will pay off. In addition, you'll find getting along becomes easier and easier.

### **Appreciating your family**

Make a list of your best traits-the things about yourself that you like. Perhaps you think your sense of humour is one of your best features. Maybe you like your nice smile. Perhaps you feel good about your talent for carpentry or your quickness in mathematics.

Next, ask yourself where these traits and strengths came from. Where and from whom did you learn them? You might see some of these same traits in your parents, your aunts and uncles or other members of your family. Do you have your mother's sense of humour? Your father's nice smile? Who taught you all those things about carpentry?

Sometimes it's easy to get so caught up in struggles with parents and other family members that you can't really see how much they have given you. You have trouble seeing what you have in common because of all the differences of opinion between you. Sometimes you may even feel embarrassed by your family. Maybe your parents don't have much money, so your family lives in a one-room house. You may feel ashamed to bring friends home.

It's important to appreciate your family and to accept your family as it is-rich or poor. Focus on what your family has been able to give you, rather than what they couldn't give you. Remember, your family has played a big part in shaping who you are and who you are going to be. Your family has also given you many of the values by which you will live your life.

Of course, this isn't to say that you are exactly like your parents. There may be just as many differences between you as there are similarities. In addition, adolescence is often a time when young people want to explore the differences between them and their parents. They want to be more independent, which is perfectly normal and healthy. However, becoming more independent is not easy. In fact, it can be very hard-for you and for your family.

### **Being understanding of your parents' values and beliefs**

When you are trying out new identities, new looks, and new ways of being, your family can find it very hard. They might wonder what has possessed you. Where did you get these funny ideas? Where did their beloved son or daughter go? Who is this young person who only wants to spend time alone or out with friends?

It can be difficult for parents to recognize that you are becoming an adult who can think for himself or herself and who has his or her own opinions. They still think of you as a child. Be patient with them while they adjust to this big change in you.

---

#### **Grace, 14, Kenya**

*"We disagree sometimes about clothing, because they say that trousers and jeans are for men. But I think wearing them is safer for me than dresses and skirts. They also do not like me plaiting rastas. They say that the style is of bad people. As for me I don't think so, I take it as a style."*

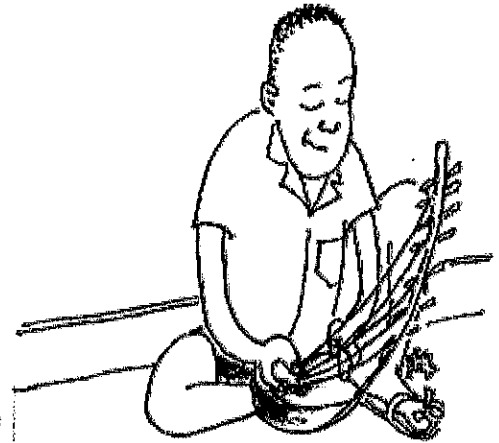
**Bernard 17, Kenya**

*"Sometimes my ideas conflict with my parents."*

Remember that your parents grew up during a different time. Even if your parents seem too traditional, find something positive about it. Your parents are a link to your culture, and this is an important and very rich part of who you are. You can learn a lot about your culture from your parents and your elders. It would be sad to lose things like:

- Your local language or "mother tongue."
- The history of your people.
- Traditional musical instruments, songs and stories.
- Traditional dances and cooking.

Imagine yourself without any of these things. Imagine if you did not know who your ancestors were. Who would you be? Where would you belong?



**Learn about your history and culture, traditional music, instruments and dances**

Without a sense of our culture and our history, we are lost.

Our ancestors, their language, culture, and beliefs are an important part of our identity. Don't under-value them!

Of course, modern culture has a lot that's very good as well—things that make our lives better, like education, modern medicine, and new ideas about the roles of men and women.

For example, girls today have many more opportunities for education and exciting careers than their grandmothers ever had.

Old attitudes—like beliefs that women and girls should only stay at home to cook and take care of the house—are changing. Attitudes about traditional practices such as early marriage are also changing.

You are living during an exciting time. You are exposed to many ideas. You have many options in terms of how you want to live your life. You can choose the best of both worlds—the best of your traditional culture and the best of "modern" culture. You can embrace what you like and think is good, and you can reject those things that you think are bad.

As you try to make your own decisions about which traditional and modern customs you want to live by, try to be sensitive to the beliefs of your parents and elders. Talk to them to find out why they feel the way they do. Explain your own feelings and thoughts.

### **Coping with your parents' expectations**

Some parents expect a lot from their adolescents. They want you to lead a better life than they did, so they want you to work hard now, to do well in school, to get serious!

**Halima, 14, Kenya**

*"Sometimes my parents put too much pressure on me. They expect me to do everything right and not to make any mistakes. They expect me to be perfect yet that cannot be possible, since we are all human beings who are liable to make mistakes all the time"*

Parents' expectations can seem like a heavy burden. Sometimes it may

Seem as though they are so focused on the future they have dreamed up for you, that they aren't listening to your own ideas on the subject.

Maybe your father has his heart set on your becoming a doctor, but you are not very strong in sciences.

Or perhaps your mother expects you to marry and stay in the village where you were born, but you want to go on to university and be a journalist.



**"He wants to be a teacher? I say No! He's going to be a doctor. That's what I want for my son."**

This type of situation can be very hard. Your parents often think they know what is best for you, even when they don't. It can be hard for them to recognize that you are an independent person with your own talents, ideas and dreams. They may have a hard time recognizing the differences between your dreams and the dreams they themselves have for you.

Try to be patient with them, and try to remember that they want your future to be a bright one. Keep talking to your parents. Tell them about your own goals and dreams, and why you want to pursue them. Show them how serious you are.

**Communicating with your parents**

Lack of open communication is the cause of many struggles between young people and their parents. Sitting down to have an honest discussion is surprisingly hard for everyone.

**Julia, 22, Ghana**

*"When I started seeing changes in me, I found it difficult to talk to my parents about it. But as time went on I felt more relaxed and was able to talk to them. I asked them any questions I wanted to."*

Most parents want very much to help their children go through

# PRACTICE YOUR ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS

Becoming assertive takes time and practice. Here's a plan that might help:

## 1 SELECT A SITUATION

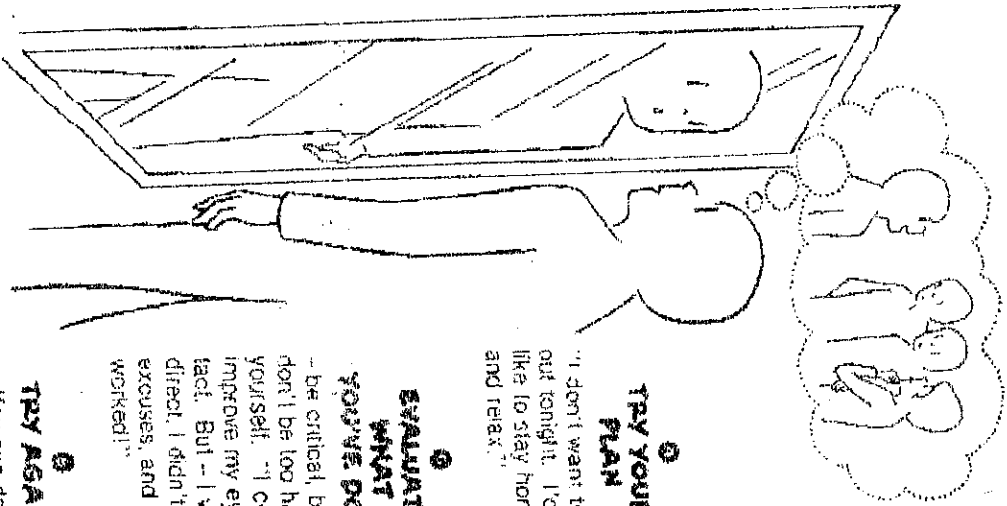
In which you'd like to be more assertive. "I'd like to tell my friends that I don't want to go out with them every Friday night."

## 2 OBSERVE HOW OTHERS ACT

In the same situation, Debbie makes excuses. It works, but some people doubt her truthfulness. Tom simply says, "No, thank you. I'd rather not."

## 3 REHEARSE THE SCENE

plan what you'll say, how you'll make your point. Practice in front of the mirror to be sure you look and act assertive as well.



## 4 TRY YOUR PLAN

"I don't want to go out tonight. I'd just like to stay home and relax."

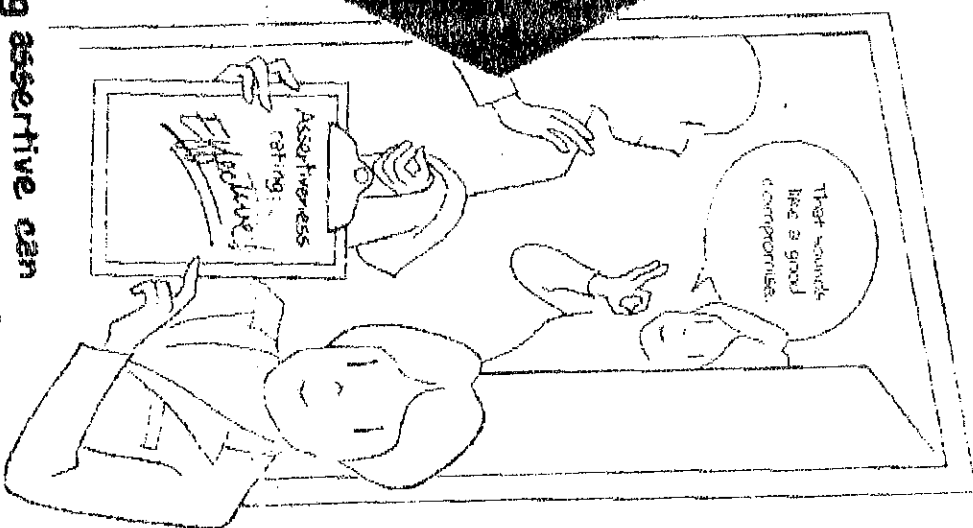
## 5 EVALUATE WHAT YOU'VE DONE

be critical, but don't be too hard on yourself. "I could improve my eye contact. But -- I was direct. I didn't make excuses, and it worked!"

## 6 TRY AGAIN!

You can do it!

# YOU CAN BECOME MORE ASSERTIVE!



Being assertive can make a difference in your life -- **A DIFFERENCE YOU'LL ENJOY!**

# What is ASSERTIVENESS ?

It's speaking your mind and allowing others to do the same. Assertive people:

**SAY WHAT THEY THINK,**  
 feel and want. Assertive people understand that they have the right to express themselves.

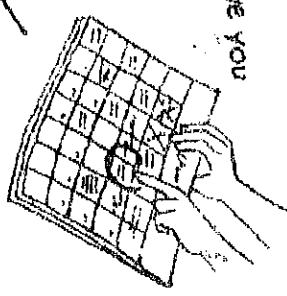
**SPEAK DIRECTLY,**  
 honestly and tactfully -- without excuses, apologies, or "beating around the bush."

**RESPECT OTHERS' RIGHTS**  
 as well. An assertive person doesn't try to intimidate or manipulate others.

# WHY should I learn to be MORE ASSERTIVE ?

Because being assertive has many benefits. Have you ever wished you could:

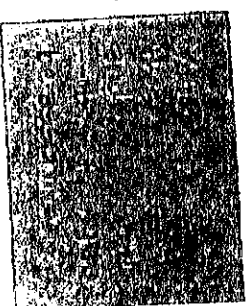
**SPEAK YOUR MIND**  
 clearly and effectively?



**ASK FOR HELP**  
 when you need it?



**GET MORE RESPECT**  
 from others?

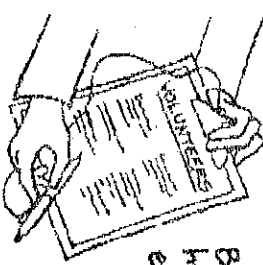


**FEEL**  
 in better control of your life?

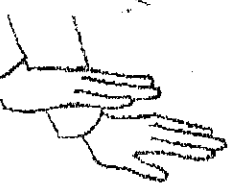
**IMPROVE**  
 your relationships with others?

**FEEL BETTER**  
 about yourself?

**SAY NO**  
 without feeling guilty?



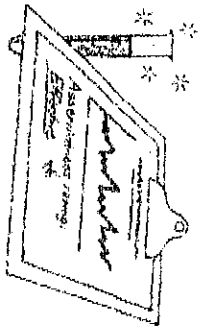
**DISAGREE**  
 without seeming hostile?





# Start by EVALUATING YOUR BEHAVIOR

Think about how you interact with your family, friends, boss and co-workers. Your answers to the following questions will help you determine your style.



## ASSERTIVE

(Expressing your feelings, thoughts and needs without threatening others.)

- Are you confident without being overbearing?
- Are you proud when you do something well?

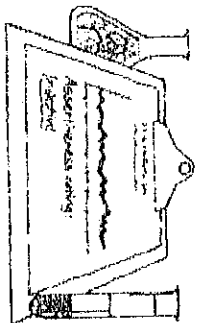
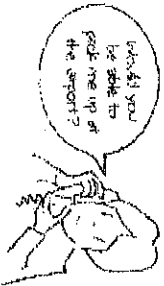


- Do you say what you feel without being hostile to others?



- Can you resist peer pressure?
- Can you give and receive compliments graciously?

- Do you respect yourself?
- Can you ask for what you want – without demanding or apologizing?



## NONASSERTIVE

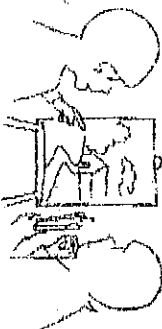
(Putting others first, at your expense.)

- Are you afraid that others won't like you if you disagree with them?

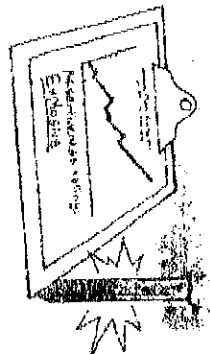
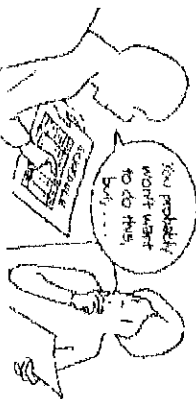


- Do you remain silent when something bothers you?

- Do you feel guilty when you say "no" to a friend, relative or salesperson?
- Is it difficult for you to give or receive criticism?



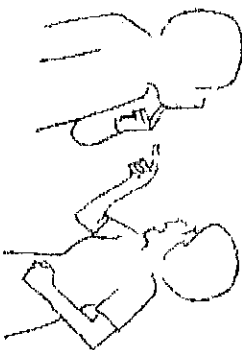
- Are you reluctant to ask for help?



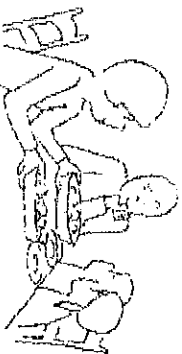
## AGGRESSIVE

(Putting yourself first, at the expense of others.)

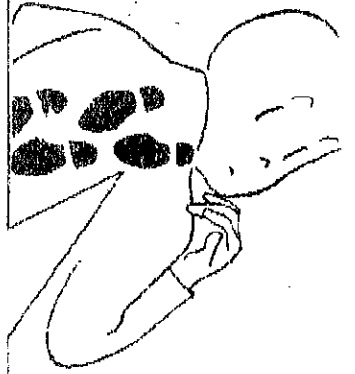
- Do you demand rather than ask?
- Are you verbally or physically abusive?
- Do you feel angry when others disagree with you?



- Do you explode when someone criticizes you?
- Do you feel that you have to win, that to compromise is to lose?



# UNDERSTAND WHAT CAUSES CERTAIN BEHAVIOR



## COMMON CAUSES OF NON-ASSERTIVENESS

include:

### FEAR

- of displeasing or hurting others
- of being rejected
- of making mistakes.

Nonassertive people are often oversensitive to other people's feelings. They're afraid that disagreement will be misinterpreted as dislike for the other person.



### FALSE BELIEFS

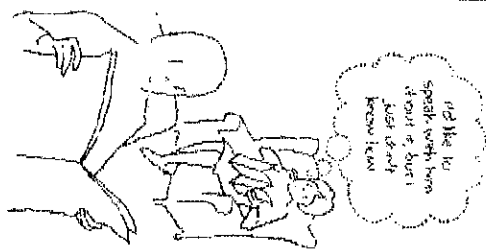
- that they are unworthy
- that they don't have any rights.

These people think that if they assert their rights they're being self-centered, or that others' opinions are more valid.



### LACK OF SKILLS

Some people never learned how to be assertive or were discouraged from being assertive as children.



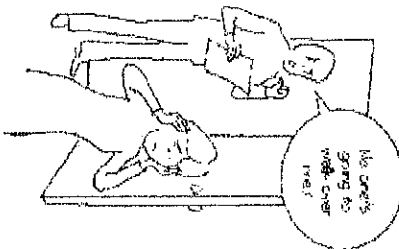
## COMMON CAUSES OF AGGRESSION

include:

### INSECURITY

or feelings of powerlessness.

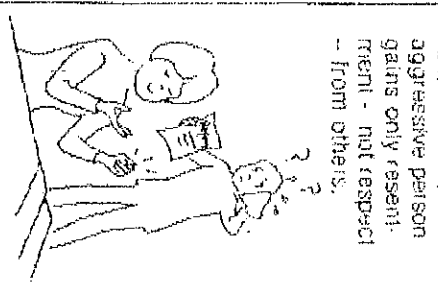
Aggressive people often feel threatened and react strongly, thinking they must protect themselves.



### RELUCTANCE

to give up the benefits of aggression

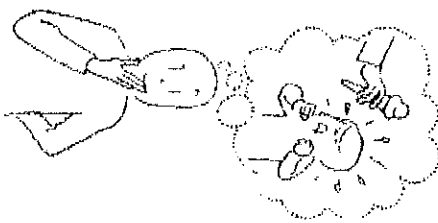
Aggressive behavior usually works in the short run because it intimidates other people. In the long run, however, the aggressive person gains only resentment - not respect - from others.



### INEXPERIENCE

in expressing needs and feelings in any other way.

Aggression is second nature to some people.

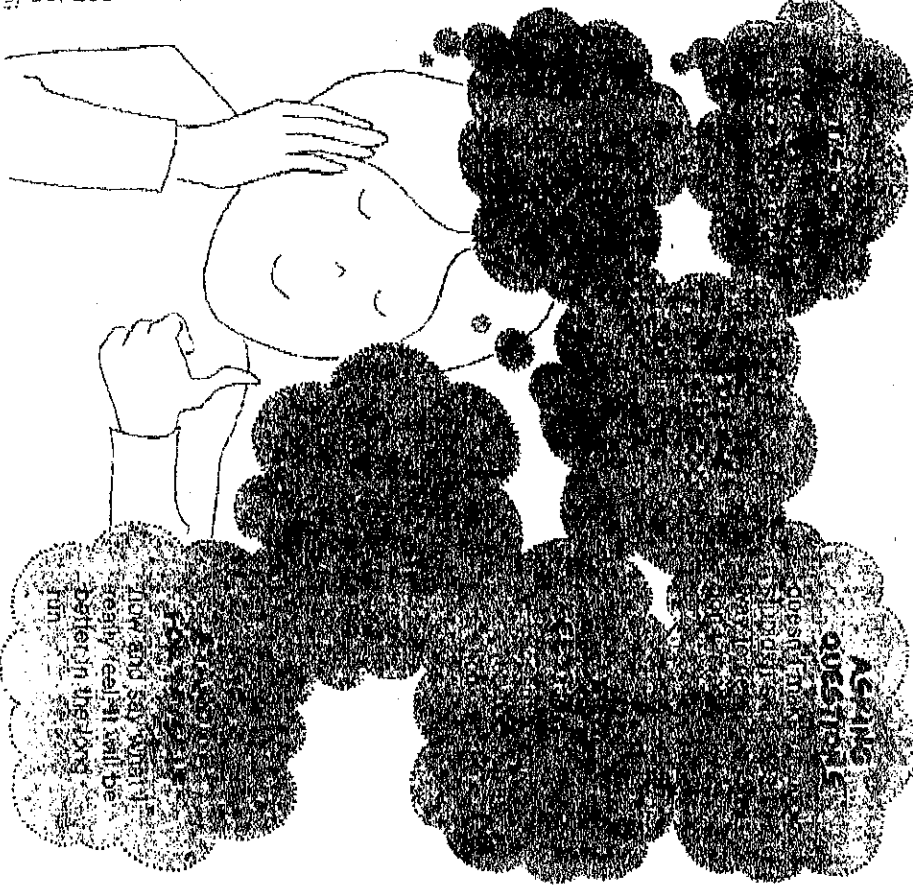


But, people can change the way they act...

# CHANGING YOUR BEHAVIOR

is really up to you! Nonassertive or aggressive actions often result when you put too much pressure on yourself, blowing things out of proportion. Learn to think calmly and rationally.

## DEVELOP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE that says:



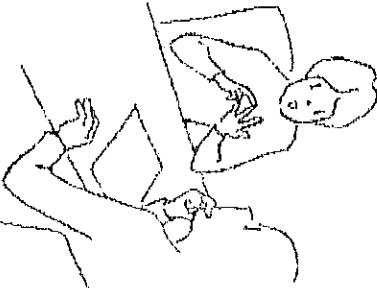
# COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE A KEY

to being assertive.

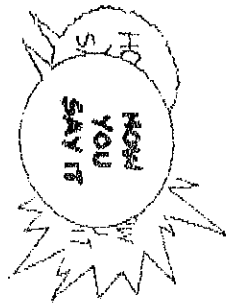
Be aware of:



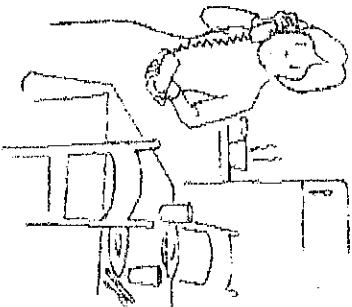
- Be specific, not general. "I've taken on more responsibilities -- purchasing and supervising -- and I think I deserve a raise." (Not, "You should give me a raise.")



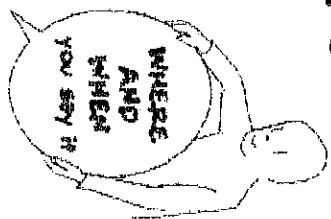
- Don't become emotional, or bring up past encounters. (Not, "I had to ask for a raise last year, too.")



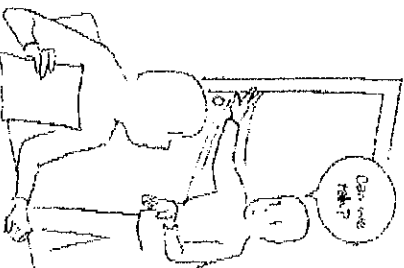
- Be calm and steady. If your voice is soft, whiny, shaky, sarcastic, or threatening, you won't come across well.



- Use "I feel" rather than "You are" statements. "I feel angry when you don't call to say you're going to be late for dinner." (Not, "You're such a thoughtless jerk!")



- It's best to be assertive most of the time. But, some times and places just aren't appropriate.

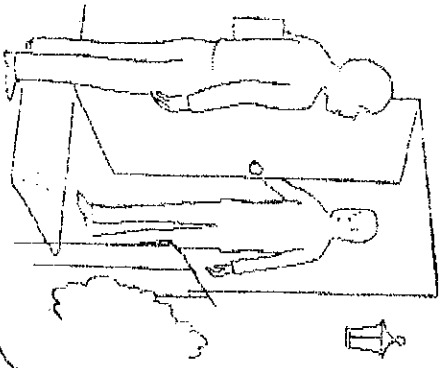


- For instance, it's best not to confront someone in front of other people.
- It's common courtesy to discuss sensitive issues in private.

# Keeping these 4 points in mind will help you **BECOME MORE ASSERTIVE**

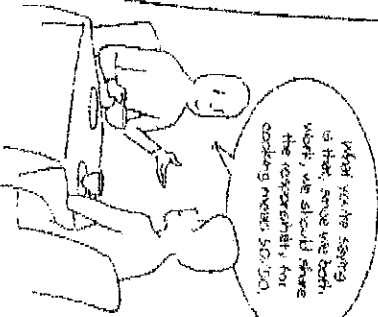
1 USE CONFIDENT BODY LANGUAGE

- Look the person straight in the eye; don't look down or away.
- Keep your body straight; don't slouch.
- Keep your hands at your sides or in your lap. Don't tap the table, fiddle with your hair or jewelry, fold your hands across your chest or point your finger at the other person.



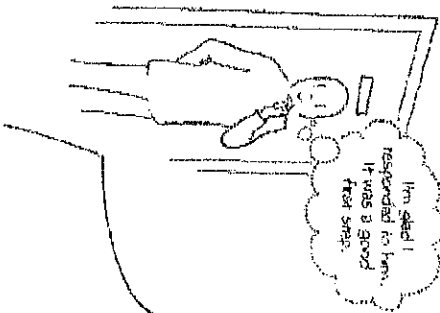
2 BE A GOOD LISTENER

- Give your full attention to the person who's speaking.
- Show your interest by responding. Don't simply nod your head in agreement.
- Briefly summarize in your own words what the person said. It helps eliminate misunderstandings.



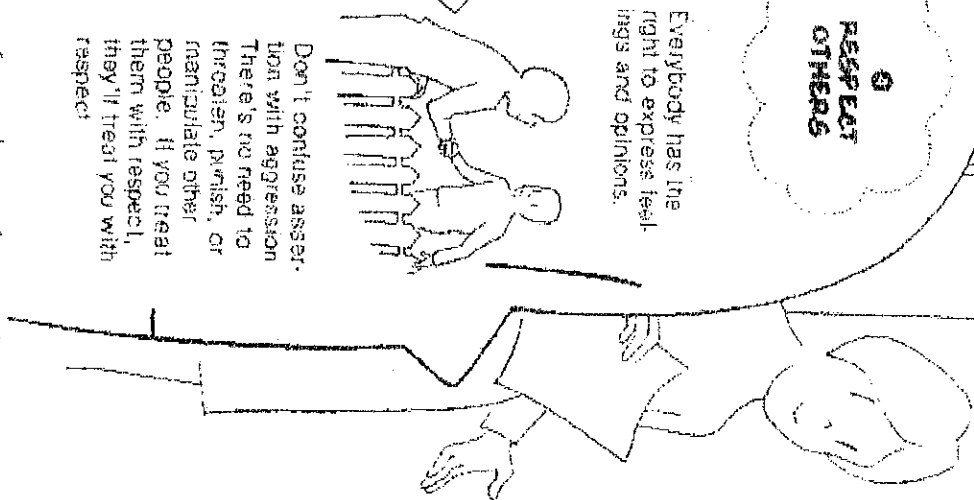
3 RESPECT YOURSELF

- Realize that you are worthy and have something to offer. Your ideas are important, and others can benefit from them.
- Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses.
- Recognize those things you do well; don't discount them because they're easy for you.
- Take gradual steps toward overcoming your weaknesses. Reward yourself as you improve.



4 RESPECT OTHERS

- Everybody has the right to express feelings and opinions.
- Don't confuse assertion with aggression. There's no need to threaten, punish, or manipulate other people. If you treat them with respect, they'll treat you with respect.



Your relationships will be stronger, healthier and more enjoyable when they're based on mutual respect.

# HOW TO BE ASSERTIVE IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

Being assertive can help you overcome awkward situations. Here are some tips that can help you to:



## SAY "NO"

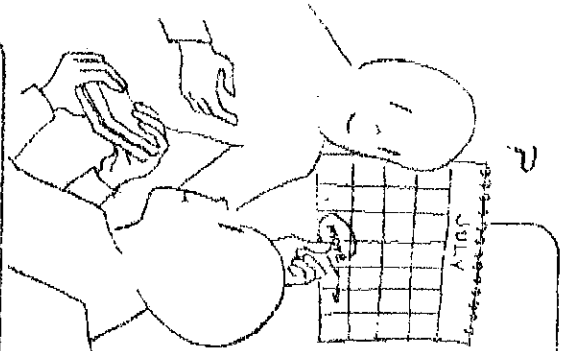
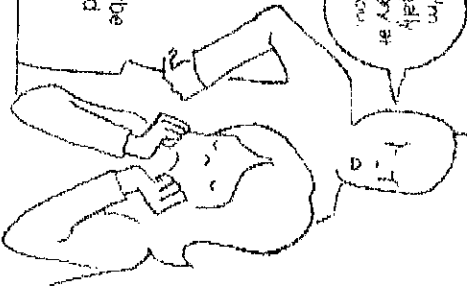
If you don't want to do something, you don't have to do it! Refusing doesn't mean you're selfish!

- Be direct. "I appreciate your confidence, but I don't want to serve on the committee."
- Don't feel compelled to give a reason.
- Feel free to strike a compromise. "I can't organize your tag sale, but I'd be happy to donate some items."

## EXPRESS YOUR ANGER

There's nothing wrong with feeling anger. It's the way it's expressed that can hurt people.

- Do say something. The other person can't read your mind — and don't count on sulking to get your message across.
- Discuss the issue (and that issue only).
- Stay calm.
- Avoid name-calling.
- Discuss solutions. Compromise.
- "I'm irritated that you're continually late. Is there some reason why you can't get here on time? Maybe we can change your schedule." (Not, "I'm sick and tired of this, you lazy bum!")



## ASK FOR HELP

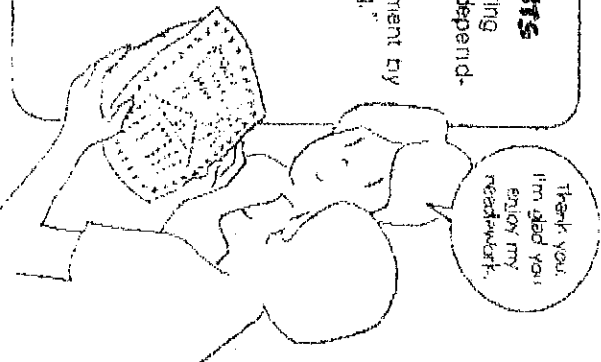
Don't be afraid to ask for help — everybody needs it once in a while.

- Be direct, clear and specific when you make a request.
- Give the person time to decide if he or she wants to do it.
- Make sure the person understands that it's OK to say "No." "I've got to move before the end of the month. Could you lend a hand sometime between the 28th and 31st?"

## GIVE AND RECEIVE COMPLIMENTS

If receiving praise is tough for you, try giving a smile, a simple "thank you," or a hug, depending on the circumstances.

- Don't insult the person paying the compliment by saying something like, "Oh, it was nothing."
- If you truly feel the compliment is undeserved, acknowledge that, but still thank the person. "I was a bit disappointed myself, but I'm glad you liked it. Thanks for your support."
- When giving praise, be sincere and specific.



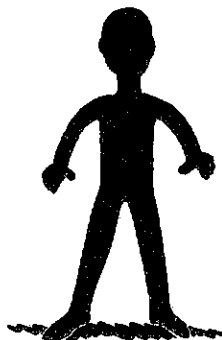
## The Bottom Line

**BEING ASSERTIVE**

## Definition

Making your feelings known in a firm and confident way, without making threats

## Skill Steps



1. Decide if you need to be assertive (determine if your rights have been violated).  
–if yes–
2. State your feelings in a firm and confident way.
3. Listen to what the other person says.

## Rationale

When you are assertive:

- you stand up for yourself
- you avoid being passive
- you avoid being aggressive
- you may get your needs met more often
- others may respect you

## BEING ASSERTIVE—EDUCATOR PAGE

### Directions

Some students don't know when to be assertive because they are not fully aware of their interpersonal bill of rights. Students need to be aware that they, and all other people, have certain rights when dealing with others. To make this notion more salient to students, remind them of the United States Bill of Rights (or a similar concept from your country). Say something such as the following to students:

*Every citizen of the United States of America has special freedoms people in some other countries don't have. When the United States of America was very young, the country's leaders wrote down how they thought the government could best be organized. What they wrote in 1787 is called the Constitution of the United States. A few years later, in 1791, they decided that some important rules were left out, so they wrote 10 amendments (or changes) to the Constitution. Those 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights explains some of the freedoms and rights American citizens have.*

Continue to discuss the Bill of Rights, and suggest to students they also have interpersonal rights. Ask students to brainstorm the basic rights they have. Write the ideas that are generated where everyone can see them. Refer to this list as their *Interpersonal Bill of Rights*. Remind students that when these rights are violated, it is crucial for them to be assertive in dealing with the person who violates their rights. Some examples of these interpersonal rights follow:

You have a right to:

- judge your own actions and take any consequences for them
- make requests
- refuse a request (say "No")
- be treated fairly and not be intimidated or bullied
- make a mistake and change your mind
- express your opinions at the right time and place
- give compliments to others
- express your appreciation to others (saying "Thank you")
- express annoyance, displeasure, or anger to others without being aggressive
- say "I don't know," "I don't agree," or "I don't understand" when you really don't
- learn from your mistakes without being teased or put down
- change your feelings
- choose whether or not to share personal information with others (although cases of physical or emotional abuse must be reported)
- be treated with respect
- have support people in your life
- express your needs, opinions, thoughts, ideas, and feelings appropriately

## TO BE ASSERTIVE OR NOT TO BE?

SOCIAL SKILL  
STRATEGIES  
BEING ASSERTIVE  
ACTIVITY PAGE

Name and Date \_\_\_\_\_

When your rights have been violated, you should be *assertive* about the violation. Being assertive means you make your feelings known in a firm and confident way, without making threats. This activity will give you practice identifying times when your rights have been violated.

### Directions

For each situation below, decide whether or not your rights have been violated. If your rights have been violated, circle *Yes* and tell why. If they have not been violated, circle *No*. Remember, when your rights are violated, you should be assertive.

1. You and your brother are supposed to do the dishes together every night after supper. Your brother said that if you did them by yourself on Monday, he would do them by himself on Tuesday. You agreed. When Tuesday night came, he acted like he forgot all about the agreement. Have your rights been violated? Yes No If yes, why?
2. A school policy is that you should be given an after-school detention the third time you are tardy to class. You were tardy for the third time in math class today, and the teacher gave you a detention. Have your rights been violated? Yes No If yes, why?
3. A company policy where you work is that no employee has to work two weekends in a row. You put in a request to have off the weekend of your brother's wedding. When the new schedule is posted, you notice that your boss scheduled you to work three weekends in a row, including the weekend of the wedding. Have your rights been violated? Yes No If yes, why?
4. Your friends at school are constantly pressuring you to smoke cigarettes with them. You tell your friends no because you know that you do not want to smoke. Your friends keep pressuring you. Have your rights been violated? Yes No If yes, why?
5. Your parents have a house rule that you will be grounded for one week if you come home after your curfew without permission. Last night, you were watching a movie at your friend's house and forgot all about the time. You arrived home 45 minutes late and your parents grounded you. Have your rights been violated? Yes No If yes, why?
6. Your parents signed you up for summer basketball camp without asking you if you were interested. Have your rights been violated? Yes No If yes, why?



## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Name and Date \_\_\_\_\_

When your rights are violated, whether in a major way or a minor way, it is important to be assertive. Unfortunately, many people don't know how to be assertive. They make the mistake of being either *passive* or *aggressive* when their rights are violated. This activity page will help you understand the difference in being assertive, in being passive, and in being aggressive.

### Directions

Read the three stories below. Based on what you learn in the stories, match the words *passive*, *assertive*, and *aggressive* to their correct definitions on the following page. Then answer the questions that follow.



#### Story 1: Passive Tia

Passive Tia loaned \$4 to Pushy Bo. Bo said he would pay Tia back as soon as he could. After waiting a couple of weeks, Passive Tia asked Bo for the money. Pushy Bo said, "You can forget about getting the \$4, because I don't have any money." All Passive Tia said was, "Oh, okay."

#### Story 2: Assertive Sandy



Assertive Sandy bought a computer that came with a one-year warranty. It worked fine for about two months, but then it crashed. When she returned it to the store, the sales clerk said he would not honor the warranty, because no one else had any trouble with that brand of computer. Assertive Sandy said in a firm and confident manner, "This came with a one-year warranty. The fact that you have had no problems in the past is irrelevant. By law, you are required to repair it." She made certain not to raise her voice, because she did not want to make the clerk angry. Her technique paid off, because the clerk honored the warranty.

#### Story 3: Aggressive Gail



Aggressive Gail was not happy when she found out Blabbermouth Kay was spreading rumors about her. Aggressive Gail stomped up to Blabbermouth Kay and said, "Look, if you ever tell another lie about me, I am going to smash your face in. You understand me?" All that Gail's aggressive statement accomplished was to get Blabbermouth Kay upset. Kay said, "You want to smash my face in? I'd like to see you try! I'll meet you outside after school, and we'll see who smashes who."

**Matching**

- |       |               |   |
|-------|---------------|---|
| _____ | 1. Passive    | A. Standing up for your rights by making your feelings known in a firm and confident way, without making threats. |
| _____ | 2. Assertive  | B. Not standing up for your rights at all. Letting people take advantage of you.                                  |
| _____ | 3. Aggressive | C. Standing up for your rights by making threats.   |

**Questions**

1. Which of the three techniques (passive, assertive, or aggressive) do you think is best and why?
2. What are possible negative consequences of being passive?
3. What are possible negative consequences of being aggressive?
4. Think about how you handle situations when your rights are violated. Put a circle around the word that best describes how you react most of the time.

Passive-----Assertive-----Aggressive

Tell why you answered the way you did.

5. Think of another person in your life. Then think about how that person usually handles situations when his or her rights are violated. Put a circle around the word that best describes how that person reacts most of the time.

Passive-----Assertive-----Aggressive

Tell why you answered the way you did.

## WHICH IS WHICH?

Name and Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Directions

Read each situation below and answer the questions that follow.

#### Situation 1

Yolanda baby-sits for her neighbor every day after school. She wants to earn money for summer camp. Camp is only two weeks away, and the neighbor hasn't paid her in over a month. The neighbor says, "I'm sorry I haven't paid you in so long, Yolanda. I just don't have the money right now. I'll pay you as soon as I can." Yolanda says, "No way! Why do you think I took this stupid baby-sitting job? Pay me now or I quit!"

1. How would you rate Yolanda's comment?  
A. Passive                                  B. Assertive                                  C. Aggressive
2. What do you think the neighbor said back to Yolanda?

#### Situation 2

Larry is baby-sitting for three rowdy boys. It is time for them to go to bed and they don't want to. Larry says, "I'm sorry, but 9:30 is your bedtime. You need to get into bed now."

1. How would you rate Larry's comment?  
A. Passive                                  B. Assertive                                  C. Aggressive
2. Do you think the boys knew that Larry was serious about their going to bed?  
Yes    No                                  Why or why not?

#### Situation 3

Juan's parents promised him a dog if he kept his grades at Cs or better all year at school. Juan really wanted a dog, so he worked hard in all of his classes. Juan reached his goal, but after school was out, his parents said that they changed their minds and that they would not be getting him the dog. Juan walked away and said nothing.

1. How would you rate Juan's reaction?  
A. Passive                                  B. Assertive                                  C. Aggressive
2. By walking away without saying anything, do you think Juan's parents understood just how disappointed he was?    Yes    No                                  Why or why not?

## I-STATEMENTS

SOCIAL SKILL  
STRATEGIES  
BEING ASSERTIVE  
ACTIVITY PAGE

Name and Date \_\_\_\_\_

You can be assertive in several ways. Sometimes walking away without saying anything can be assertive. Another effective way to be assertive is to express your feelings in a firm and confident way, without making threats, using an *I-statement*. I-statements clearly explain how a person is feeling, what the problem is, why he or she is experiencing the feeling, and what is needed to solve the problem. I-statements usually do not include the word *you*, and therefore they don't put people on the defensive. For example, pretend that you are listening in math class but you don't understand the teacher's directions. The teacher acts impatient when you ask for help. The following responses illustrate the difference between an I-statement and a you-statement.

**I-statement:** *I feel frustrated when my questions aren't answered, because I want to understand. I need to hear the directions explained again, please.*

**You-statement:** *You make me feel frustrated when you don't answer my questions. You need to explain the directions again, please.*

The following is a formula for making an I-statement.

### I-STATEMENT FORMULA

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

when \_\_\_\_\_  
(state the problem or violation)

because \_\_\_\_\_  
(state the reason why you feel that way)

What I want or need is \_\_\_\_\_  
(state your needs/rights)

### Directions

Read the following situations and use the formula to write an I-statement for each.

1. You have proof that your friend has been talking badly about you behind your back.

**I-statement:** *I feel...*

(Continued)

I-STATEMENTS—Continued

2. One of the people in your group is losing group points because he or she is choosing to break class rules.

**I-statement:** *I feel...*

3. Your parent embarrassed you in front of your friends by teasing you about having a girlfriend. You didn't think the teasing was funny.

**I-statement:** *I feel...*

4. A friend borrowed \$5 from you and hasn't paid you back. You've already reminded the person two times.

**I-statement:** *I feel...*

5. You've been waiting at a restaurant for the hamburger and French fries you ordered over 20 minutes ago. You see others being served who arrived after you.

**I-statement:** *I feel...*

Name and Date \_\_\_\_\_

When you feel your rights have been violated, you can choose to be passive, assertive, or aggressive. Each technique will result in different consequences and outcomes.

**Directions**

Read the following situations, and think about the possible consequences of each technique.

**Situation 1**

Matt's boss promised him a 25¢ per hour raise after he had been working for six months. Matt waited for quite a while after the sixth month, and he still hasn't received his raise.

1. What could Matt say or do that would be passive? What are the possible consequences?
2. What could Matt say or do that would be assertive? What are the possible consequences?
3. What could Matt say or do that would be aggressive? What are the possible consequences?

**Situation 2**

Lisa should have been the next customer to be waited on, but the sales clerk kept waiting on all the adults first.

1. What could Lisa say or do that would be passive? What are the possible consequences?
2. What could Lisa say or do that would be assertive? What are the possible consequences?
3. What could Lisa say or do that would be aggressive? What are the possible consequences?

## BEING ASSERTIVE CHALLENGE

Name and Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Define *being assertive* and write the three skill steps to use when being assertive.  
(definition) \_\_\_\_\_  
(step 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
(step 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(step 3) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Explain why it is important for a person to know how to be assertive.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Describe a situation at home, at school, and in the community when you would need to be assertive.  
(home) \_\_\_\_\_  
(school) \_\_\_\_\_  
(community) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Compare being assertive to being aggressive. Tell one way they are the same and one way they are different.  
(same) \_\_\_\_\_  
(different) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Write a short story about "Aggressive Gordy." Include information about how others feel about him. (Use the back of this page if you need more space to write.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Think about how you handle situations when your rights are violated. Put a circle around the word that best describes how you react most of the time.  
Passive-----Assertive-----Aggressive  
Put a circle around the word that best describes how you would like to react when your rights are violated.  
Passive-----Assertive-----Aggressive  
Explain your response. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## RESISTING PEER PRESSURE

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### GUIDELINES

Use the following guidelines to determine what to do or say when resisting negative peer pressure:

- Use an assertive “I” message to take responsibility for your own feelings and actions.
- Do not use an aggressive “you” message to offend your peers when resisting peer pressure. Instead, just walk away from the situation with dignity and grace.
- Suggest positive alternative behavior to replace negative behavior or peer pressure.
- Take a positive course of action that you believe is right, be strong, and stand by your decision.

### EXAMPLES OF HOW TO RESIST NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

*Situation 1:* Your friends invite you to drink beer on Saturday night. You don't want to participate. What will you say or do?

“Kim, I can't drink beer because I promised my dad that I would not drink beer. Let's go to the movies.”

*Situation 2:* Your peers decide to beat up a rival gang member and you don't want to get involved in this fight. What will you say or do?

“Jose, I don't have anything against Mario. I'm not going to hurt him because I don't want to end up in Juvie (Juvenile Hall).”

*Situation 3:* Your friends are planning to wear earrings and get a “mowhawk” hair cut. You don't feel comfortable looking like that. What will you say or do?

“John, I don't want to get a “mowhawk.” “Let's get a flat-top instead because it looks better.”

*Situation 4:* Your friends ask you to go “drag racing” with them. You are afraid of getting into a dangerous accident. What will you say or do?

“Robin, I'm not going drag racing. I don't want to end up in the hospital.”



---

## **TYPES OF BEHAVIOR FOR RESISTING PEER PRESSURE**

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### ***ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR:***

An assertive person stands up for his/her beliefs and values, and is not influenced by peer pressure to do something he/she believes is not the right thing to do.

*Actions:* Calm manner, positive response, under control, firm and definite

*Feelings:* Confident, secure, sensitive

*Typical Assertive Statement:* "I can't do this because I don't think it is the right thing to do and I don't want to get into trouble."

### ***AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR:***

An aggressive person stands up for her/his own beliefs and values, but resists peer pressure by threatening others through physical contact, put-down messages, negative stares and gestures.

*Actions:* Agitated, boistrous, angry

*Feelings:* Insensitive, insecure, selfish

*Typical Aggressive Statement:* "You idiot! You must think I'm stupid to do something like that."

### ***PASSIVE BEHAVIOR:***

A passive person does not stand up for his/her own beliefs and values and gives in to the demands of peer pressure.

*Actions:* Meek, timid, weak voice, poor posture

*Feelings:* Insecure, afraid, nervous

*Typical Statement:* "Yeh I'll do it." "OK you win."

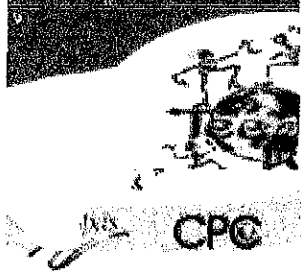
### ***PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR:***

A passive-aggressive person seems to agree to the demands of a peer; agreeing to do the deed, but disguising feelings that are expressed in different ways; trying to make the other person feel guilty for applying peer pressure. mean something else, hide feelings that come out in different ways, and try to make the other person feel guilty about the request.

*Actions:* Sly, sarcastic, high/low voice, grin/sneer

*Feelings:* Insecure, selfish, fearful, repressed anger

*Typical Statement:* "Yeh, I'll do it, but I'll probably get into trouble with my parents because of you, but lets do it anyway."



# Teen Web

Acknowledgment | About us

## Website A

- ▶ Your changing body
- ▶ Basic body care
- ▶ Reaching your dreams
- ▶ Care of your Heart & Head
- ▶ Relationship & Falling in love
- ▶ Changing relationship
- ▶ Cool links

## Website B

- ▶ Sexuality & Sex
- ▶ Taking care of your Sexual Health
- ▶ Pregnancy and Contraception
- ▶ Girls' Bodies
- ▶ Boys' Bodies
- ▶ Cool Links
- ▶ me

## Other topics:

- ▶ Abortion
- ▶ Emergency contraception
- ▶ Free HIV testing

## Website C

- ▶ Fun in Nairobi
- ▶ Pressured Sex and Sex Against Your Will
- ▶ Substance Abuse
- ▶ Glossary



Foundation is the sponsor of

## Getting along with your parents

- Appreciating your family
- Parents values and beliefs
- Coping with expectation
- Communicating with your parents
- When you need other sources of help

Some adolescents are blessed to have parents with whom they can easily get along and discuss important things. But many young people have trouble getting along with their parents during adolescence. Their relationship with their parents becomes more complicated. They start struggling and arguing about everything with their parents. They feel as though their parents are much too old-fashioned and traditional. They feel as though their parents don't trust them or have confidence in them.

### Gifty, 14, Ghana

*"My parents are free and they share the problems with me so I do not disagree with them. They always make me feel happy and advise me a lot. I want parents to have time for their children. Parents should talk to their children and advise them a lot because it depends a lot on your parents for your dreams to come true."*

### Cathy, 17, Uganda

*"My mother's strictness coincided with my body changes. She discouraged me against groups, yet it was the time when I needed them most, to share experiences."*

### Panaito, 14, Kenya

*"My parents sometimes prevent me from socializing with my fellow youths."*

### Barlay, 16, Kenya

*"Parents try to make us good but sometimes they are strict. They choose friends for us, and I do not like that."*

### Halima, 14, Kenya

*"My parents and I always disagree about going out without a bulbuli (black dress and headscarf worn by Muslim women), and now that I have finished my examinations, they don't like me to go out all the time."*

## BUILDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### I. INTRODUCTION:

Communication says a lot about ourselves. It tells us something about our self esteem, our ability to relate to one another and what we think about others. The way we communicate tells how confident and comfortable we are in expressing what we feel and think.

Communication involves many traits

1. What we say
2. How we say it.
3. What the other person hears us say
4. How the other person interprets what we say.

### II. WE COMMUNICATE IN MANY WAYS.

1. Verbally—Using words. (This involves the kind of language we use and the tone of our voice when we speak.

2. Body language: (arms crossed, hands on our hips indicate ways that we feel)
3. Facial expressions: (frowning, rolling our eyes, smiling, laughing)
4. We communicate with our eyes: (glaring, squinting, rolling our eyes.)
5. We communicate with our hands: (baseball signs)

We will test our communication skills today by using two methods:

1. Verbal communication:
  - a. Describe a picture to the group without telling them what it is.
  - b. Play password: one word descriptions of a picture or thing.
2. Body language: (non-verbal)
  - A. Play a pantomime game. Make up cards with words on them and have the Person act them out to the group.
3. How well do you listen:
  - A. Blindfold one person: Another person directs him to draw a line through a Maze on paper.

B. Blindfold one person: Another person leads him through an obstacle course of some kind

C. Put a puzzle together blindfolded. (One person talks another one through Putting a puzzle together.

**III. TAKE THE COMMUNICATION TEST: (ADULTS ONLY)**

**V. SNACKS/ REFRESHMENTS.**

Adolescence safely, but often they don't know how. They're afraid of embarrassing you, and they're afraid of embarrassing themselves. Their own parents probably didn't talk to them about adolescence and all the changes one goes through. Thus, it's very hard for them to help you when they themselves did not get much help. Like you, they may not have much experience in this area, or any role models to draw upon.



**Show your parents that you care about pleasing them.**

How does one learn to talk openly with parents, aunties, uncles, grandparents or other family members? How do you build a relationship where they trust you? Especially if you have been arguing lately, how do you even start? Of course, there's no simple answer, but here are tips you can try:

**Show your parents you care about pleasing them.** Volunteer to help your parents with something they are working on—in the kitchen, around the house or in the garden. While you are working together, bring up the issue you want to discuss.

**Anthony, 15, Kenya**

*"The best way to approach your parents is when you have done some work that makes them happy and then you can go and talk to them about what you want."*

- **Choose a good time to talk.** Timing is everything! Choose a time when your parents are not too tired or busy. Maybe it is better to wait until the weekend when they are feeling more relaxed and less worried about work.
- **Start with easy topics.** Start with topics that aren't too embarrassing to you or to them and about which you don't disagree strongly. In many families, parents and their children only start talking to each other when it's something serious—like when the children want to do something the parents don't like. This is a hard place to start.

You can first try talking to your parents about a friend's situation or problem, rather than your own. This can give both you and your parents a sense of each other's values and can help build trust and understanding about a situation that is not too personal. But don't betray your friend's trust, and do protect his or her privacy. For example, you can talk to your parents about the friend's problem, but don't name the friend who is in this difficult situation.

- **Show your parents that**

Ask them what they think and why they feel a certain way. Try to understand their perspective and their concerns. Perhaps you think your parents don't want you going to discos simply because they are strict. But maybe they know something about the discos that you don't. Perhaps they have heard of girls being raped there or that people are pushing drugs there.



They may have some very good reasons for feeling the way they do. Show them that you are interested in their reasons and care about what they think.

**Ask your parents what they think and why. They may have good reasons for feeling the way they do.**

- Be respectful. Your parents and your other older relatives care a lot about respect. So even if you feel frustrated, try not to shout or make them feel you are being disrespectful. Also, be respectful of their values. While many of your values may be similar to those of your family, some may be different. If you want to live by different values than those of your parents, that is fine, but don't criticize your parents for their beliefs—even if they seem too old-fashioned or traditional to you.
- Earn their trust. Show your parents that you are responsible and that they can trust you. If they tell you to be home by a certain time, make sure that you are home by then. Be open with them about what you want to do and why. Don't try to sneak off to a disco when you've told your parents that you are going to a friend's house. If you try to deceive them, they will probably find out and will feel as though you have broken their trust.

Your parents need to respect your privacy, but you should not abuse it by living a secret and risky life. Your parents also need to respect your choice of friends, but in return, you need to show them that you can choose friends well. Don't hang out with people who don't care about you and whose values fundamentally oppose those of your family.

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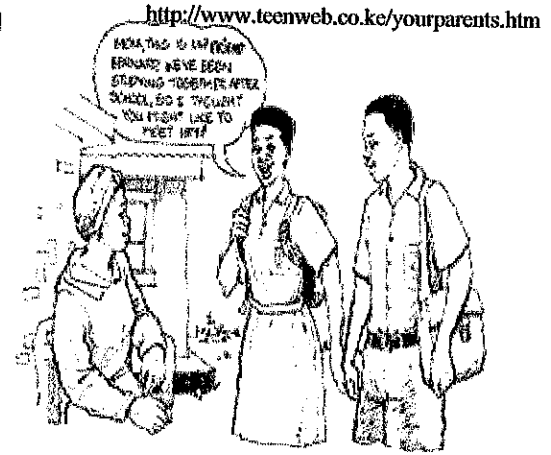
**Aloysious, 19, Uganda**

*"You should do what you are told even if you dislike it, and don't give them stress by doing things that you know will hurt them dearly. By doing all these when you talk to them they will not refuse anything you tell them."*

- Be open with your parents. Remember, you are changing So fast

that your parents may feel as though they hardly know you.

It is your responsibility to make sure that they do! Talk to them about your dreams, your expectations and your needs so that they feel confident that they know you and what you want. Share your concerns and worries with them, and ask them what they would do in your situation.



Let your parents meet your friends so they know whom you are going out with.

**Be open with your parents and introduce them to your friends so that they know they can trust you.**

When your parents feel as though they know you well, they will feel better able to trust you. It will help them begin to accept you as the adult you are becoming and to stop treating you as a child.

It will help them feel comfortable allowing you to make more and more decisions on your own.

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**Prisca, 14, Kenya**

*"The best way to approach our parents is by telling them of our problems and asking them if they can help. If you ask them, they can't refuse because they are loving and understanding. You can plan a day and sit together with them and share the things you want to say because they can't refuse."*

- **Show your parents you care about them.** Just as you want them to show you that they love you, show your parents that you care about them. Do nice things for them to show them that you love them and want to please them.

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**Sherifan, 15, Ghana**

*"You should sometimes buy gifts for your parents. It really makes them happy."*

Getting along well with your parents and coping with their strictness, their protectiveness, their big expectations and their traditional values can be hard. It will take time and patience. But it will be worth every minute and every bit of effort you put into it. It will be worth it because there will be times when your friends and peers cannot advise you as well as your parents can.

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**Gifty, 14, Ghana**

*"You should respect your parents and put shyness aside. You should tell your parents your problems because they are the best people to have answers to your troubles and problems. Talk to your parents often."*

**Jennifer, 17, Ghana**

*"You should help them in the house in every thing they do. In helping in all these things the love between you and your parents will be long."*

### **When you need other sources of help**

Sometimes the difference of opinion between you and your parents

can be too big. You have tried talking with them yourself, but it didn't work. They aren't listening to you, and the matter is serious.

For example, supposing your parents told you that they want to pull you out of school and marry you off to an older man.

You have tried to explain to them how important your schooling is to you. You have told them about your dreams of becoming a teacher, but they haven't heard you.

There are many difficult situations like this, which you can't manage alone. You need to find an adult who can help you.



**If you are having trouble talking to your parents, try asking another adult for advice and help**

**Evans, 16, Kenya**

*"If you cannot talk to your parents to resolve a problem or argument, you should talk to a close relative, a person like your aunt or uncle who will advise you and know what is good for you."*

Try talking to another kind and caring adult you trust—someone who understands you, like a relative, an adult brother or sister, a teacher, a family friend, the parent of a close friend, a religious leader, or a social worker. Ask someone to advise you and to help you by talking to your parents about the matter.

Even if you aren't having a serious problem with your parents, but just want advice, you may sometimes find that it is easier to talk to an aunt, uncle or another relative. There are many people who care about you and who will be happy to help you if you ask them.



## Getting along with your parents

Adolescence is a time when many young people and their parents have trouble getting along. But it doesn't always have to be this way. There's a lot you can do to improve your relationship with your parents:

- **Appreciate your family.** Accept your family as it is-rich or poor. Spend some time thinking about what your family has given you, such as your personal strengths, your values and other things you like about yourself. Don't simply focus on what they have not been able to give you.
- **Be understanding of your parents' beliefs and values.** Your parents grew up in a different time. Even if you feel that your parents are too traditional, find something positive about it. Learn from them about your history, traditional customs, music and language.
- **Remember that your parents want the best for you.** Coping with parents' expectations can be hard, especially when their dreams for you and your own dreams are not the same. Talk to your parents about your goals and why you want to pursue them. Show them you are serious and hardworking.
- **Be honest and open with your parents.** Look for good opportunities to talk to your parents. Give them a chance to get to know the adult you are becoming. Show them that you are trustworthy and responsible.
- **Show your parents that you care about their feelings and want to please them.** Ask your parents why they feel the way they do. Try to understand their concerns. Show them that you are interested in and care about what they think.
- **Be respectful.** Even if you and your parents disagree, try not to shout at or be rude to them.
- **Be patient with your parents.** Give them time to get used to the fact that you are becoming an adult who has opinions and who can think for herself or himself.
- **Be patient with yourself.** Building a more open and close relationship with your parents takes time and hard work. Don't get frustrated or discouraged if it does not happen overnight.

Sometimes, the differences of opinion between you and your parents can be too big. Find a caring adult you trust-an aunt or uncle, older sibling, family friend, teacher, religious leader or social worker-and ask for advice. Perhaps they can help you resolve the problem with your parents.

www.positivepath.net

## **Your Face Says More Than Just Words**

### **By Harriet Meyerson**

Entertainers and professional speakers know that the way to connect with their audiences is through eye contact and facial expression. In your personal and business life you can be more dynamic with facial and eye expression.

#### **WHEN YOUR EYES MEET – YOU BEGIN TO COMMUNICATE**

"One of the most obvious aspects of behavior when talking to another person is where you look. If you look directly at the person as you speak, it helps to communicate your sincerity and to increase the directness of your message," state Robert Alberti and Michael Emmons, in the seventh edition of their best selling book "Your Perfect Right, A Guide to Assertive Living."

You may have experienced the frustration of talking to someone who was reading the newspaper, and although he or she may have been able to repeat every word you said, you did not feel heard. You may have felt slighted when you were talking to someone at a school function that seemed to be scanning the room looking for someone else. When you make an effort to look directly at the people you are talking to, you show them respect, make them feel important, and you create a more positive relationship with co-workers, teachers and students.

What's even more important, avoiding eye contact can make you seem sneaky, guilty, bashful, or frightened. The common expression, "He couldn't look me in the eye," is often used to describe the guilt of another person.

While using eye contact be careful not to stare, squint or blink your eyes rapidly. It's more natural to look away from time to time in a relaxed comfortable manner.

#### **YOUR FACE REVEALS SINCERITY**

"Ever see someone trying to express anger while smiling? It just doesn't come across. Effective assertions require an expression that agrees with the message," say Alberti and Emmons. If you are sending mixed messages, others will believe your facial expression rather than the words you say. A forced smile will come across as insincere. Tension can also be seen in your face with a wrinkling forehead or a pursed or tight-lipped mouth. Rolling the eyes and disapproving looks can have powerful negative effects on communication.

If you have to say something negative, take the time to sit down and have a meaningful discussion with the other person, and your body language will naturally become more congruent with your message.

On the positive side, if you are excited about something, don't be afraid to show it. When your face lights up, the energy you create is contagious and spreads sunshine to others.

The bottom line is to pay attention to your eye contact and facial expressions if you want others to pay attention to you.

About the author: Harriet Meyerson, president of The Confidence Center, works with companies that want confident, loyal, and happy employees, and with individuals who want the confidence they need for success. Harriet is a member of the National Speakers Association and the author of *Fire Up Your Staff on a Shoestring Budget*.

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E-mail: [Harriet@ConfidenceCenter.com](mailto:Harriet@ConfidenceCenter.com)

The original version of this article can be found at [www.positivepath.net/ideasHM10.asp](http://www.positivepath.net/ideasHM10.asp)

## ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE

The original text on assertive discipline was written over 20 years ago by an American, Lee Canter. This work has been revised and refined over the years. The aim of this programme is to teach students to choose responsible behaviour and in so doing raise their self-esteem and increase their academic success. The model is based on consistency, follow-through and positive relationship building. The belief that teachers have a right to teach and pupils have a right to learn is the key and is empowering to all concerned.

Many teachers have been taught that if their curriculum is first rate, they will have minimal classroom disruption. It cannot be argued that the better the curriculum and the more motivating, exciting and appropriate it is the fewer behaviour problems will develop. The problem, however, is that before lessons can begin one must first have the attention of the pupils. They must be seated, quiet and listening.

A good curriculum will help students stay on task, but first they must know how to be on task.

Pupils cannot be expected to guess how a teacher wants them to behave in all situations. If they are to succeed in the classroom they need to know, without doubt, what is expected of them. When pupils are not given the limits they need, they will act up in order to make the adults around them take notice. A pupil's disruptive behaviour is often a plea for someone to care enough to make them stop. Pupils need to know what behaviour is expected of them. They need to know what will occur if they choose not to comply with those expectations.

Pupils need to know that the teacher will recognise and support positive behaviour just as they will limit inappropriate or disruptive behaviour. However, teachers need to take time to teach pupils how to choose what is responsible behaviour. This then is the "assertive teacher". Canter defines this person as "one who clearly and firmly communicates her expectations to her students, and is prepared to reinforce her words with appropriate actions. She responds to students in a manner that maximises her potential to get her own needs to teach met, but in no way violates the best interest of the students.

A classroom discipline plan is a system which allows the teacher to clarify behaviours which are expected from students (pupils) and what they can expect from the teacher in return. The aim of the plan is to have a fair and consistent way to establish a safe, orderly, positive classroom in which teachers teach and pupils learn. The plan consists of the three parts:

- rules** that students (pupils) must follow at all times;
- positive recognition** that students (pupils) will receive for following the rules;
- consequences** that result when students choose not to follow the rules.

A discipline plan makes managing pupil behaviour much easier; it protects pupils' rights, helps ensure parental support and gives all school staff a secure procedure to work to.

### Rules

- Choose rules that will let pupils know what behaviours are expected in the classroom at all times.
- Choose a limited number of rules (five at most).
- Choose rules that are observable. Vague rules are difficult to comply with and difficult to enforce.
- Choose rules that can apply at all times throughout the day.
- Choose rules that apply to behaviour only. They should not address academic or homework issues.
- Involve pupils in choosing the classroom rules.

## Positive Recognition

- Use positive recognition to encourage pupils to behave appropriately and to continue appropriate behaviour.
- Increase a student's (pupil's) self-esteem through consistent, meaningful positive recognition. Let the pupil know their efforts have been noticed.
- Create a positive classroom environment.
- Consistent positive recognition will help teach appropriate behaviour and establish positive relationships with pupils.
- Praise pupils often. It is the most powerful, effective positive recognition a teacher can give.
- Set a goal to send a specific number of positive notes home to parents each week.
- Set a goal to make a a specific number of positive phone calls each week to parents.
- Recognise students' (pupils') responsible behaviours with rewards.
- Motivate students (pupils) through special privileges such as extra computer time or being class monitor.
- Use a classwide positive recognition system as a means to motivate all students (pupils) to learn a new behaviour or to work on a problem behaviour that the group is having.

## Consequences

- When disruptive behaviour occurs the teacher must be prepared to deal with it calmly and quickly.
- The teacher must be prepared by having in place consequences that pupils receive should they choose to disregard the rules of the classroom.

### Consequences:

- are a choice;
- do not work in isolation; they must be balanced with positive support;
- do not have to be severe to be effective;
- must be appropriate for the pupils, and the teacher must be comfortable using them;
- must be ones the pupils do not like, but they must never be physically or psychologically harmful;
- should be organised into a hierarchy that clearly spells out what will happen from the first a pupil breaks a rule to the fifth time the same pupil breaks a rule in the same day.

The first consequence should be a warning.

Parent and more senior teacher contact should appear near the end of the hierarchy.

The hierarchy should include a Severe Clause for dealing immediately with severe misbehaviour.

As soon as the school changed, the children said 'We like this. But we'll always cause problems because we don't like adults ordering us to do things.'

So we said 'Why don't we make our school into a democracy, with the pupils as citizens who share in making the decisions? Why can't we plan as a teacher and pupil project, so that the children can take initiatives and help make the plans?'

We needed a forum for making decisions. We were already using Circle Time in each class. This seemed the ideal way for making plans for the whole school. (Headteacher Highfield)

## TASK 2: ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE

**Draw up a set of classroom rules, positive recognition strategies and consequence appropriate to a junior school classroom.**

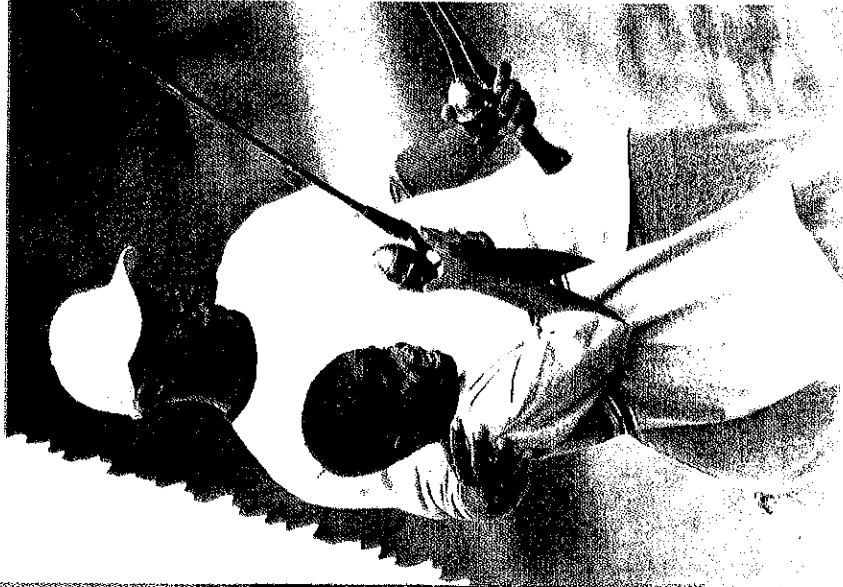
## Communicating with Your Child



*Make the most of everything you say and do.*

# Communication IS A TWO-WAY STREET

## It involves Talking & Listening



Communicating with children may seem like a natural skill, but even the best parents learn it through trial and error. Yet it is not a difficult skill to master and the rewards are worth the effort. By communicating with your child, you can:

- Improve your child's self-esteem by showing how much you value his/her opinion and input.
- Teach your child how to communicate with others.
- Build a positive home relationship with a strong parent-child bond.
- Develop your child's confidence in his/her ability to express ideas and information.
- Convey the words of wisdom your child needs to grow up healthy and safe.

### Communicate

#### WITHOUT WORDS

*A hug, a touch on the shoulder, a "love note" in your child's lunch box, a kiss goodnight, a spontaneous game of basketball—these are non-verbal ways to help your child feel closer to you and develop greater self-esteem.*

# 10 WAYS to Improve COMMUNICATION

- 1 Make time every day to talk to your child.
- 2 Make clear ground rules for communication, including "no put downs."
- 3 Set an example by the courteous, caring, attentive way you communicate with your child and with others.
- 4 Show an open attitude, so your child feels free to express himself or herself to you.
- 5 Tell your child often "I love you." This is one of the most important things you can do.
- 6 Express your delight when your child shows good values. Whether its cooperating with others, finishing homework or making his/her bed...acknowledge actions you want repeated.
- 7 Help your child learn to listen. It is a valuable skill.
- 8 Share activities with your child that are conversation ice breakers, such as playing board games, or watching quality TV.
- 9 Choose times to talk wisely. The best times for discussions are when everyone is well-rested, well-fed and without pressing tasks to get done.
- 10 When your child is old enough, hold weekly family meetings at which everyone can share positive news and voice their grievances.

If tough topics, such as violence, sex and drugs make you uneasy, ask other trusted adults about how to discuss these important subjects with your child.

If communicating with your child is a problem, consider seeking professional guidance.

## USE "I" RATHER THAN "YOU"

"I" messages let you express yourself effectively, but without criticism. Say "I wish you would help me do the dishes, because I'm tired when I get home from work," rather than "You're lazy, not helping out around the house."

## BRIEF IS BETTER

Children retain shorter messages longer. For instance, instead of saying, "I've told you to turn down the TV. Can't you see I'm on the phone," try "Lower the TV, please."

## Don't just Talk—

# Communicate

- Be sensitive to your child's feelings. Think before you speak.
- Use a quiet, courteous voice.
- Give your child complete attention when he/she speaks.
- Choose words and concepts your child can understand.
- If you're unsure of what your child means, have him/her repeat his or her words, until you're both on the same wavelength.
- Help your child learn to make choices. Ask what he/she thinks should be done.
- Encourage responses. Try asking questions, such as "How was your day?" and "How did you do on your test?"
- Avoid finishing your child's sentences or interrupting him/her.
- Give your child a chance to explain himself/herself without jumping to conclusions.
- Don't stop communication with guilt, commands, ultimatums, preaching, judging or words like "never" or "always."
- Avoid nagging. Most children tune it out.



# IMPORTANT messages for your Child in Today's

## **VIOLENT WORLD**

### **IT'S OKAY TO TELL**

*Encourage your child to tell an adult about anyone who threatens violence or actually hurts him/her or others with words or actions. It's also okay to tell about any child who threatens to hurt himself/herself, or actually does so.*

### **SHOW RESPECT**

*If you respect others, your child learns respect from your example. Eliminate signs of prejudice from your life. Choose friends who show respect. If your child acts out of prejudice, don't ignore the incident. Explain that it's wrong to put down others by words or actions.*

### **MANAGE ANGER**

*Teach your child how to cool off when angry, and how to compromise as well. These lessons will help your child learn to safely let off steam and peacefully handle conflicts with other children or adults.*

### **PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY**

*Emphasize the value of your child's respect for his/her own body.*

### **ROLE-PLAY**

*This is an excellent way to teach everything from how to deal with bullies to how to stay safe from strangers.*

## **Communicate YOUR PRAISE**

*Sincere praise enriches your communication and your child's life. Here are some choice praises. Use them often!*

I love you • That's incredible • You're No. 1 • Amazing effort • Wonderful! • You've got it! • Superb • You're special • Your work is fantastic • Your project is first-rate • Way to go! • You tried hard • Your help counts • You're a real trooper • I knew you had it in you • Keep up the good work • You're a great example for others • I Love You • You should be proud of yourself • You made a difference • What would I do without you? • You're a big help • You've got what it takes • I love you • You're a winner • You've really grown up • What a great listener • You deserve a hug • Thanks for being honest • Take a bow • You're doing a lot better • You brighten my day • I LOVE YOU

## UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN - EAU CLAIRE



# Counseling Services

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## Assertive Communication: An Introduction

By P.J. Kennedy

UW-Eau Claire Counseling Services

### Assertion skills help you:

- Stand up for yourself
- Express feelings directly
- Improve relationships
- Give Compliments
- Give Criticism
- Make requests
- Say No / Set Limits

### COMMUNICATION STYLES

Assertion is a style of communication. We all have learned different styles of communication as we have adapted to the various situations of our lives. If some of our styles of communication do not work well in our current situation, they can be changed and replaced with new behaviors. Though there are times when it is best to be passive and times when it is best to be aggressive, in most situations it works best to communicate assertively.

#### DEFINITIONS (from Lange & Jakubowski)

##### 1) Assertion

- a)...standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways that do not violate another person's rights.
- b)...The basic message of assertion is: "This is what I think. This is what I feel. This is how I see the situation."
- c)...The goal of assertion is communication and mutuality; that is, to get and give respect, to ask for fair play, and to leave room for compromise when the rights and needs of two persons conflict.

##### 2) Passivity

- a)...violating one's own rights by failing to express honest feelings, thoughts, and beliefs and consequently permitting others to violate oneself or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in such an apologetic, diffident, self-effacing manner that others can easily disregard them.
- b)...The basic message of passivity is "My feelings don't matter - only yours do. My thoughts aren't important - yours are the only ones worth listening to. I'm nothing - you are superior."

c)...The goal of passivity is to appease others and to avoid conflict at any cost.

### 3) Aggression

a) ...directly standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a way that is often dishonest, usually inappropriate, and always violates the rights of others.

b) ...The basic message of aggression is: "This is what I think - you're stupid for believing differently. This is what I want - what you want is not important. This is what I feel - your feelings don't count."

c) ...The goal of aggression is domination and winning, forcing the other person to lose. Winning is ensured by humiliating, degrading, belittling, or overpowering other people so that they become weaker or less able to express and defend their needs and rights.

## IMPORTANCE OF PROCESS

The major impact of interpersonal communication comes not from what we say (content) but from how we say it (process). Assertive content with passive process will communicate passivity. Some examples of important process variables include:

**Assertion:** Direct but non-invasive eye contact, modulated voice, respect for spatial boundaries, use of illustrative gestures, an erect but relaxed posture.

**Passive:** No eye contact (or indirect evasive eye contact), soft/whiny/or muffled voice, cringing/or physically making yourself small (hang-dog posture), use of nervous or childish gestures.

**Aggressive:** Invasive/angry staring-eye contact, loud strident voice, invasion of spatial boundaries, use of aggressive gestures (parental finger), stiff, "muscled up", posture, towering over others.

## IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. Assertive behavior is often confused with aggressive behavior, however, assertion does not involve hurting the other person physically or emotionally.

2. Assertive behavior aims to equalize the balance of power, not to "Win the Battle" by putting down the other person or rendering them helpless.

3. Assertive behavior includes expressing your legitimate rights as an individual. You have a right to express your own wants, needs, and ideas.

4. Remember: Other individuals have a right to respond to your assertiveness with their own wants, needs, and ideas.

5. An assertive encounter with another individual may involve negotiating an agreeable compromise.

6. By behaving assertively, you open the way for honest relationships with others.

7. Assertive behavior is not only determined by "what you say". A major component of the effect of your communication depends on "how you say" it.

8. Assertive words accompanied by appropriate assertive "body language" make your message more clear and have more impact.

9. Assertive body language includes:

- a) Maintaining direct eye contact.
- b) Maintaining an erect posture.
- c) Speaking clearly and audibly.
- d) Not using a soft, whiny, or muffled voice.
- e) Using facial expressions and gestures to add emphasis to your words.

10. Your communication style is a set of learned behaviors. Assertive behavior is a skill that can be learned and maintained with practice.

### **ASKING FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE**

One specific type of assertive behavior is a request for behavior change. For example: You may need to ask a room-mate to turn down the stereo so you can study. It is necessary to request that others change behavior that does not work, but it is often difficult for people to make such requests:

1. You have a right to ask for behavior change from others. (They also have the right to refuse.)
2. When you do not ask others to change a problem behavior, you risk allowing the behavior to continue and your relationship to be strained, or waiting until you are "fed up" and starting a fight.
3. Requests for behavior change protect your rights, at the same time they build clear communication and more effective relationships.
4. When asking for behavior change use an "I message" format:

**WHEN ...** (objectively describe the other's behavior)

**THE EFFECTS ARE ...** (describe how the behavior concretely effects you).

**I FEEL ...** (describe how you feel).

**I'D PREFER ...** (describe an alternate behavior you prefer).

**OK? ...** (or synonymous request for closure).

You may wish to follow requests for behavior change with statements of logical consequences ("If you turn down the radio when I need to study, I will also make an effort to be considerate of your needs").

5. Demonstrate assertive body language when asking for behavior change: direct eye contact, erect posture, clear speech.

### **Assertion Training**

Our Counseling Service offers group and individual assertion training opportunities free of charge to enrolled students. You may also check out books, handouts, and videos on assertive communication from our resource library in 2122 Old Library.

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**Counseling Services**

University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire

Mon, Tue, Thurs: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Wednesdays - 8:00 am to 8:00 pm (Spring/Fall Semesters only)

Fridays - 8:00 am to 4:30

Old Library 2122

Phone: (715) 836-5521

For Questions or Information regarding [Confidentiality](#)

To contact a counselor via e-mail, please see: [Staff Profiles](#)

# HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Kids with ADHD have all kinds of feelings. Circle the feelings that you have sometimes. At the bottom of the page, there is room for you to add other feelings you have had.

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Energetic    | Confused      |
| Athletic     | Overloaded    |
| Creative     | Angry         |
| Sensitive    | Frustrated    |
| Attractive   | Misunderstood |
| Smart        | Picked on     |
| Friendly     | Forgetful     |
| Caring       | Unpopular     |
| Curious      | Impatient     |
| Special      | Scared        |
| Artistic     | Dumb          |
| Humorous     | Teased        |
| Imaginative  | Anxious       |
| Enthusiastic | Disorganized  |
| Adaptable    | Tense         |
| Happy        | Hyper         |
| _____        | _____         |
| _____        | _____         |
| _____        | _____         |
| _____        | _____         |

Share this page with your parents or counselor.

# WHAT MAKES YOU HAVE GOOD FEELINGS?

Draw a picture or make a list of things that make you feel good.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw a picture or write a list of things that make them feel good. The box is currently blank.

# MAKING FRIENDS

Making friends is not always easy for someone with ADHD, but with practice you can make it come out right. What you choose to do together with your friend can be important!

Write down 5 things you really like to do. Think of someone you would like to do each of these with.

Here is an example:

I like  
BOWLING

This might be fun to do with  
JEREMY

Now you try it:

I like

This might be fun to do with

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Talk with your parents about helping you set up a special time with someone you like.



# FRIENDSHIP



◆ TIME SPENT WITH A FRIEND IS SPECIAL ◆

# TAKING TURNS

To be a good friend, you need to be able to take turns when you play games.

On these pages you will find some suggestions for games that will help you practice taking turns while you have fun playing with one other person. When you get good at it, try playing with two or more other kids.

## ◆ Games to Play with One Other Person

Cards

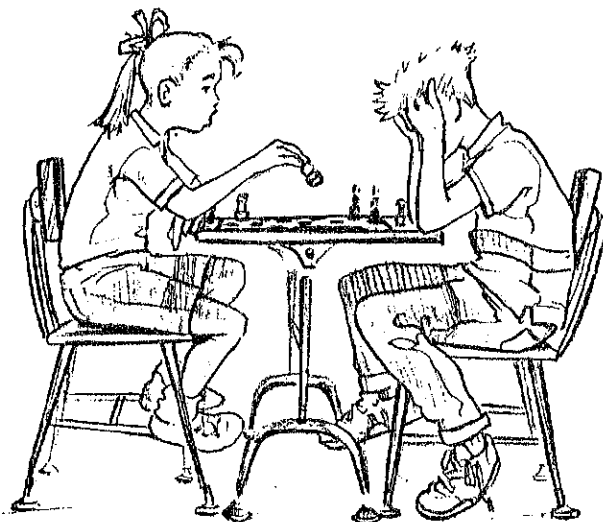
Catch with a ball

Chess

Checkers

Hangman

Hopscotch



## ◆ Games to Play with Two or More

Jump rope

Board games

Card games

Charades

Make up a play or put on a show

add your own favorite games here

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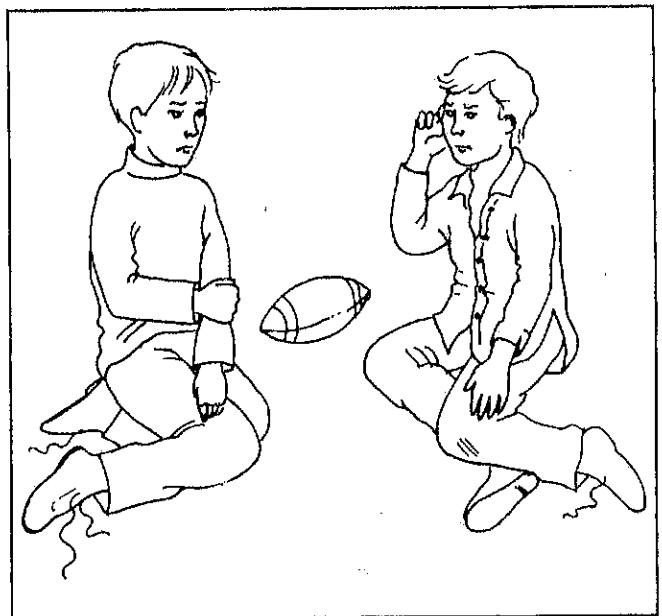
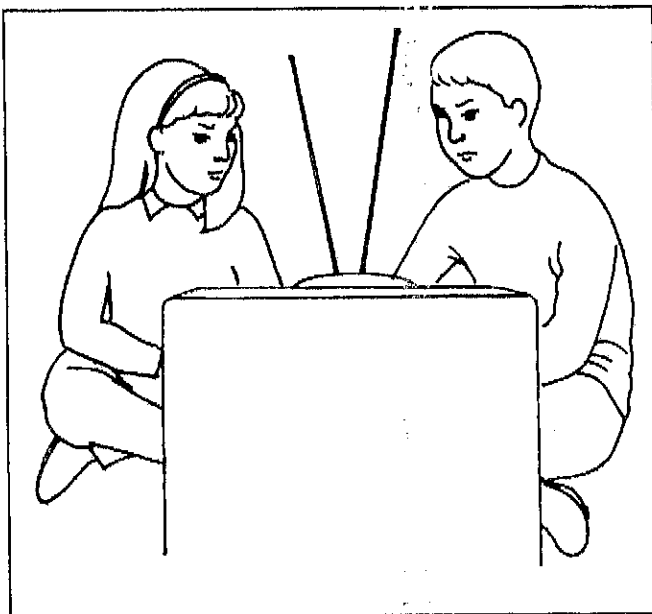
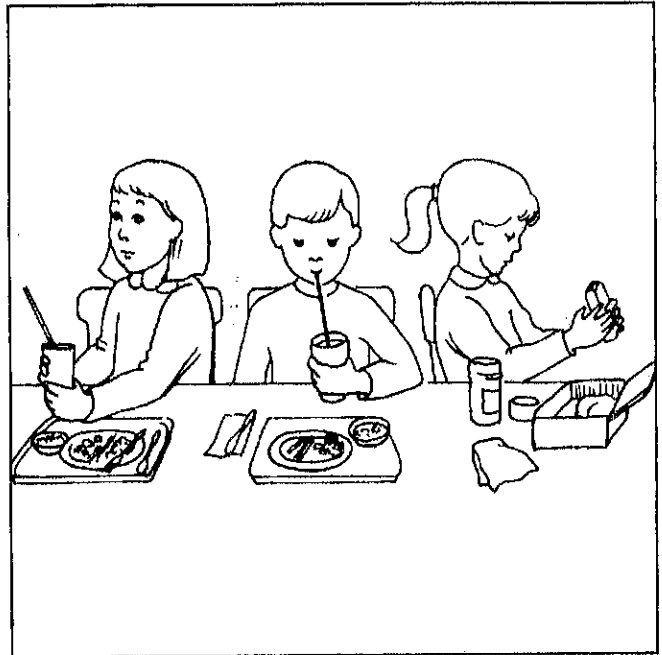
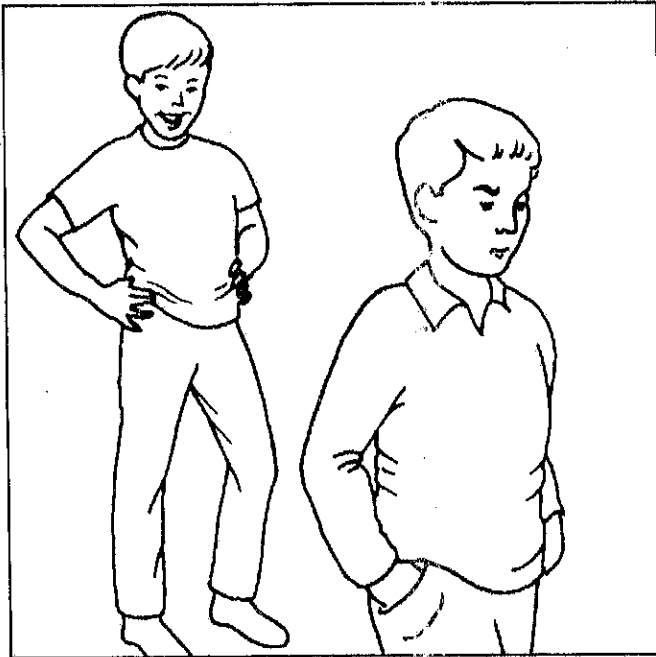
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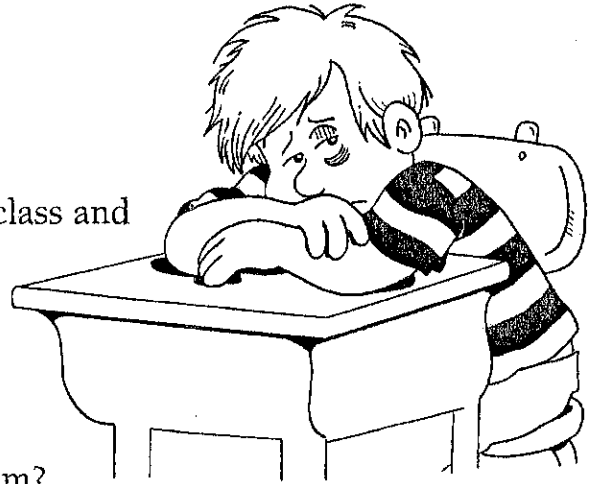
# When Friends Fight

Almost every friendship has some bad times. Even people who like each other very much will sometimes fight. Why do you think each of these friends had a fight? Write the reason underneath.



# Empathy

Jonathan always falls asleep in first period class and looks like he hasn't brushed his hair in days. He never knows the answer in class, and it looks like his eye is kind of bruised.



What do you think might be wrong with him?

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Do you think it would help to say anything to him, or should you let a teacher take care of it?

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List three things you might say to Jonathan to let him know he has a friend to talk to and that you are concerned about him.

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How can you tell when someone else is having problems?

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