“I” Statements are Simple and Powerful Ways of Communicating with Yourself and Others

I statements are powerful message of impact and personal perspective. I statements build a foundation of trust and respect in relationships. I statements are the basis for many relationship and communication processes. They help draw awareness to the defenses of projection, splitting and isolation. I-Statements are an impactful form of communication because accountability and responsibility remain with the speaker. To connect with others, build intimacy, or let them know us better.

I-Statements connect people. I feel happy when I see you smile because I believe you love me. An I statement starts with I feel and can expand to include many dimensions of ones experience of a situation. There are many forms of I-statements. The following are templates.

Simple I-Statement
1. breath
2. understand your intention
3. “I feel” emotion

I feel ______.
Examples:
I feel sad.
I feel happy.
I feel mad.

Ix3-Statements
1. breath
2. understand your intention
3. “I feel” emotion
4. “when I” observed event
5. “because I” story I told myself about the events

I feel _____ when I ______ because I ______.
I feel sad when I am home alone, because I want us to be together.
I feel sad when I see others suffer, because I believe in the dignity of all humans.

Powerful I-Statements
1. breath
2. understand your intention
3. “I feel” intensity emotion
4. “when I see” observed event
5. “because I believe” belief I formed about the events

I feel _____ ______ when I see _____ ______, because I believe _______ _______.
I feel very happy when I see you smile, because I believe happiness spreads and we should be joyful.
Guidelines in Constructing I-messages

Don’t

- I feel that... – can be a disguised you statement or be a thought or judgment.
- I feel like... – can be a disguised you statement or be a thought or judgment.
- start with anger – start with a positive and after you have learned to effectively use an I statement and have an agreement with your partner
- use labels like crazy, weird, rigid, – categorize people and blame them, be present, take the time to share your perception of
- use “oughts” and “shoulds” they are criticism and judgments without providing the impact of these actions

Do

- use emotion such as joy, sad, glad, hurt, afraid, or mad
- Convey your positive emotions, joy, happiness, relief, etc.
- Express the intensity of your emotions, use adjectives such as very, dull, great,
- Be specific, when did this happen, what did you see, etc.