

What Are "I" Statements?

I-statements are a powerful tool for effective communication that improves relationships by expressing feelings and needs without blame.

I-statements, also known as "I-language" or "I-messages," are a powerful tool for effective communication. They allow us to express our own feelings and needs without placing blame on the other person. By taking responsibility for our own ideas and feelings, we can deflate barriers to communication and improve our relationships.

It's easy to fall into the trap of using "you" statements, which tend to be accusatory and blame-based. But, when we use "you" statements, we're likely to trigger defensiveness in the person we're speaking with and can lead to a breakdown in communication. On the other hand, "I" statements help to keep the conversation moving in a positive direction, by focusing on our own feelings and needs. They also allow the other person to understand our perspective and to come to a solution together.

Using "I" statements can also be beneficial in conflict resolution. They allow us to express our feelings without attacking the other person, which can help to defuse a tense situation. Additionally, "I" statements can be used to express positive feelings, such as appreciation and gratitude.

To use "I" statements effectively, it's important to focus on identifying our own feelings and the facts of the situation. And remember to avoid using any "hidden you" messages, which can still place blame on the other person.

Practicing creating and using "I" statements is an ongoing process that requires practice and patience. And as we learn to use "I" statements, we'll be able to communicate more effectively, deflate barriers to communication and improve our relationships with others. To help guide you through the process, you can find a worksheet that can assist you in creating your own "I-statements" and practicing them in different scenarios.

Benefits of "I" Statements

"I-statements," are a powerful tool for effective communication that offers a wide range of benefits.

BENEFITS OF USING "I" STATEMENTS:



Help express one's own feelings and needs without sounding accusatory or blaming towards the other person.



Allow the speaker to take responsibility for their own ideas and feelings, rather than placing blame on the other person.



Keep the conversation moving in a positive direction, rather than escalating into a heated argument.



Deflate barriers to communication and can go a long way towards solving communication problems.



Improve the overall communication and relationship between people.

Using "I" Statements

I statements allow individuals to express their own feelings and needs without blame, improving communication and relationships.

"YOU" STATEMENT

"I" STATEMENT

"You always forget to take out the trash"



"I feel frustrated when the trash isn't taken out on time"

"You're always late"



"I feel disrespected when you're consistently late for our plans"

"You're always on your phone"



"I feel frustrated when the trash isn't taken out on time"

"You never listen to me"



"I feel ignored when you're on your phone during our conversations"

"You're so lazy"



"I feel disappointed when things aren't done on time"

As you can see, "you" statements tend to be accusatory and blame the other person, while "I" statements focus on expressing one's own feelings and needs without placing blame. "I" statements allow for a more constructive conversation and can help deflate barriers to communication.

How to Avoid Making Sneaky "You" Statements

Sneaky "you" statements use the words "I feel" or "I think" to express a feeling or thought, but actually convey blame or criticism towards the other person and are not true "I" statements.

"I" STATEMENT

SNEAKY "YOU" STATEMENT

"I feel anxious when I have to give a presentation in front of a large audience."



You didn't prepare me enough for this presentation, and now I'm feeling anxious."

"I feel frustrated when the house is messy."



"You never help me with cleaning the house, and it's causing me to feel frustrated."

"I feel hurt when you don't respond to my messages in a timely manner."



"You always take so long to respond to my messages, and it makes me feel like you don't care about me."

"I feel exhausted after working long hours."



"You're not giving me enough help with work, and it's causing me to feel exhausted."

"I feel sad when we don't spend enough quality time together."



"You're always too busy to spend time with me, and it makes me feel sad."

True "I" statements express one's authentic feeling in a non-blaming way, and acknowledge the speaker's own role in their feelings and the choices they have to manage them

"I" Statement Practice

An effective "I" statement follows this format:

"I feel [emotion word] when [explanation]. Practice writing your own below.

BLAMING	"I" STATEMENT
"You always leave your things everywhere! It's so messy.	I feel overwhelmed when the house is cluttered and I have to move things around to get to what I need.
You never listen to me! I might as well talk to a wall.	"I feel _____ when _____" _____ _____
You always have to have the last word! It's so annoying.	"I feel _____ when _____" _____ _____

Tips for Writing Effective "I" Statements:

Start with "I feel..." and then use an emotion word, such as "frustrated," "disappointed," or "unsure."

Be mindful of your tone of voice. Even if your words are carefully chosen, a blaming tone can still come across. Use a neutral and calm tone.

In your explanation, describe the situation and how it affects you without blaming the other person. Avoid using accusatory language.

"I" Statement Journal

Think of a recent situation where you could have used "I" statements, and answer the questions below.

Describe a situation that came up recently where you could have used "I" statements to communicate effectively.

What emotions were you feeling in this situation?

How did you initially respond to this situation?

How could you have used "I" statements to communicate your feelings and perspective in this situation?

How do you think using "I" statements could have changed the outcome of the situation?

In similar situations in the future, what "I" statements can you use to express your feelings and perspective?

How can you make sure to use a calm and neutral tone when using "I" statements in this specific situation?

What other strategies can you use in addition to "I" statements to effectively communicate in this specific situation?
