



Community Support Nights Communication Skills

Living in community gives us the chance to practice communication skills, and understand more about our own communication style.

I. Consider three approaches to addressing disagreements:

Aggressive – “The Steamroller” I win; you lose. I impose my needs on you, and your rights are compromised.

Benefit: I get what I want.

Cost: I alienate others and damage relationships.

Assertive – a balanced approach. We arrive at a shared understanding. Neither of us has any basic rights compromised.

Benefits: We are each heard and understood.

The group benefits from knowing both of our experiences.

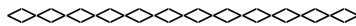
Our relationship deepens.

Passive – “The Doormat” I lose; you win. I sacrifice my needs and allow my rights to be infringed upon.

Benefit: I maintain group harmony.

Cost: I feel resentful.

The group doesn’t know me as well or experience me fully.



II. “I statements” allow for expression without accusation, which can elicit defensiveness. Some formulas to try:

1) “When you *__(fact, not accusation)__*, I feel *__(emotion)__* because *_____*.”

e.g., “When you *speak loudly*, I feel *nervous*, because *my family fought a lot*.”

2) “I feel *__(an emotion, not a thought)__* when you *__(statement of fact, not opinion)__*. Would you please *__(concrete and non-emotional request)__*?”

e.g., “I feel *frustrated* when you *leave dishes in the sink after I’ve done them for the evening*. Would you please *wash your own if you have a late snack*?”

NOT: “I feel *like you are deliberately provoking me* (a thought) when you *leave dishes all over the place* (not fact). Would you please *be more considerate* (not concrete)?”