

Living Well Safe and Free WORKSHOP #3

Communication

Wisconsin Living Well adapted these materials from the Green Mountain Self-Advocates' Stay Safe Curriculum

Materials Needed:

- Presentation flip chart paper and markers
- Index cards
- Group Agreements Written on Flip Chart Paper (to post in class)
- Before class make a "How to Make I Messages" visual using flip chart paper "How to Make I Messages" using the visual you created on flip chart paper before class: www.bumc.bu.edu/facdev-medicine/files/2011/08/i-messages-handout.pdf (see Activity 1, Step 2)

This class teaches people to:

- Demonstrate ways to be a good communicator.
- Compare aggressive, assertive and passive communication styles and practice using "I messages" for communicating assertively
- Learn how to present themselves in the community so as to decrease likelihood of being taken advantage of and understand that they cannot control another person's behavior and therefore it is NEVER the victim's fault
- Participants will learn that when you put together the three forms of communication (words-tone-body language) you become an effective communicator. Participants will learn the "NO/GO AND TELL" strategy.

Open the Class by Explaining:

- There are many types of communication. People get messages across with the words, tone of the voice and body language.
- More than half of the way we communicate is with body language.
- Being aware of how we use all of these modes of communication will increase our ability to be more effective at getting our message across.
- It is very important that the participants realize how they present themselves to others in public, so as not to draw unnecessary attention to themselves resulting in being taken advantage of.

Activity 1: Effective Communication: Using "I Messages"

Step 1: Use the I Messages document that goes with the communication unit to talk about why I messages are important.

Step 2: Walk the group through the “How to Make I Messages” using the visual you created on flip chart paper before class:

1. Say how you feel: “I feel angry...”
2. Say what you have that feeling about: “about the way he spoke to me...”
3. Say why you feel this way “because it embarrassed me in front of my friends.”
4. Say what you would like to see instead: “I would prefer that we discuss these things in private.”

Step 3: Give the group some examples. Call on some participants to explain a situation that frustrated them and coach them on to put together an I Message to address the situation.

Activity 2: Using Assertive Communication

Step 1: Ask for 3-4 volunteers to do a role play.

Step 2: Have group members form a line as though they were standing at a grocery store check-out line.

Step 3: Explain that passive communication means letting someone have his or her own way at your expense. A passive person is shy and afraid to speak up. They might:

- ❑ Slouch, not look at the person, looks at the floor and their feet
- ❑ Seldom answer questions
- ❑ Feel uncomfortable and afraid to say what they want
- ❑ Not start a conversation
- ❑ Be afraid to say hello,
- ❑ Mumble or speak real quiet
- ❑ Let other people make decisions for them
- ❑ Be afraid to try new things or dream about the future
- ❑ Sit away from the group

Step 4: Ask the volunteers to show how a passive person would act as the instructor pretends to be another customer trying to cut in front of the line.

Step 5: Ask people to discuss what they saw.

Step 6: Repeat a similar role play showing aggressive communication. First, explain that aggressive communication is demanding what you want with no regard for others. An aggressive person is pushy and bossy. They might:

- ❑ Be in the person's face

- ❑ Talk too loud
- ❑ Tell people what to do
- ❑ Put down other people
- ❑ Not listen to other people
- ❑ Stand too close
- ❑ Clench their fists
- ❑ Threaten people
- ❑ Insist that things always go their way

Group Discussion:

Ask if anyone knows what the word assertive means. Explain that assertive communication is expressing thoughts, feelings and needs in direct, honest and appropriate ways that do not violate another person's rights.

An assertive person might:

- ❑ Stand or sit straight, face the person
- ❑ Look them in the eyes
- ❑ Keep a good distance - If you smell or feel the other person's breath, you are probably too close. Keep a comfortable distance.
- ❑ Use good voice tone
- ❑ Just say what you want without feeling guilty
- ❑ Stick up for what you believe you need
- ❑ Be positive even when you disagree. Make statements that express your feelings without putting others down ("I statements").
- ❑ Give the other person a chance to respond.
- ❑ Use good facial expression
- ❑ Speak up don't wait for permission to say something

Do the role play again with the other customers acting assertively. After the role play, discuss passive, assertive and aggressive communication styles. Ask participants to share a story about a time he/she have stood up for

More Activities:

Have the group role play an assertive response to each of the situations listed below or other scenarios they brainstorm:

1. Your friend is 40 minutes late to pick you up.
2. You are out with a group of friends when your partner makes an insulting remark about your looks
3. You are out with someone you don't know very well and he or she starts asking you very personal questions that you don't want to answer
4. Your partner is pressuring you to have sex

5. Your friend asks you to loan him or her \$50 but you've been saving that money for something else
6. You decide a relationship is not working out for you and you want to break up

Wrap-Up Discussion Questions:

1. What are the differences between passive, assertive, and aggressive communication styles?
2. Is being assertive difficult or scary? Why or why not?
3. What makes assertive communication effective in most situations?
4. Why is assertive communication important for a healthy relationship?
5. How can people learn to increase their assertiveness?

Activity 3: Walking Tall/Looking Strong

Step 1: Talk about and demonstrate the importance of body language as a communication tool by modeling for the group the difference between looking strong, walking confidently and looking weak like someone who could be easily taken advantage of.

Step 2: Next, have the participants demonstrate their weak look, and their confident look, Walking Tall/Looking Strong.

Step 3: Have a group discussion about the differences between the two.

Activity 4: Rules of Personal Safety... NO/GO/TELL

Step 1: Draw this pie chart on presentation paper and explain that our our tone and our body language make up over 90% of how we communicate.



Step 2: Ask each participant to say the word “NO” without any feeling, tone, or body language. Then ask them to say the word with feeling, tone and body language.

Step 3: Have participants practice in groups of two and then have each person present to the class. Or, have people stand in a circle and using an object to toss, toss the object to a participant and that participant will use their tone, feeling and body language to emphasize the word “NO”. Then that participant tosses the object to another person and so on.

Step 4: Once the participants have mastered an effective use of the word “NO” show them how to leave a situation by teaching “GO”. Ask for people to volunteer to do some role plays with you. They will demonstrate “NO” and “GO”. Use any of the following role plays or ask participants to brainstorm ideas:

- A strange adult asks the person to help find his puppy
- Someone snaps a girl’s bra strap
- A very nice person approaches the participant at a movie theater and invited him/her over to his/her house
- A person asks the participant to look at a magazine or pictures of people who are naked
- A person demands that you give them some money
- A man is peeking from behind a tree, watching you and your friends talking in the park
- A car stops and the driver, who is a total stranger, says you mother got hit by a car and he needs to take you home
- A car stops and the driver you don’t know asks for directions
- Your cousin offers you drugs and asks you to keep them in your dresser

- A support staff tries to touch your private parts while watching TV

*If anyone in the group is completely non-verbal, try to get them to gesture pushing something away and use other gestures such as head shaking, angry looks or yells.

*If anyone in the group uses a wheelchair practice turning and moving away, blowing a whistle, honking a horn, pressing an alarm. If the person uses an augmentative communication device, they may want to have a button that makes a loud noise.

*Tell participants that in a dangerous situation, it may not be possible to escape, but you can still resist.

Step 5: Ask the group, after “NO” and “GO” what should they do next? They need to tell someone what happened. Ask who or where in the community do they go to for help? Who can they talk to when they are upset, scared, angry, confused?

Get participants to come up with a list (which you write on presentation paper) including teachers, police, neighbors, support workers, doctor, nurse, the director of your agency, protective services, your boss, your co-workers etc.

Step 6: Make up personal safety cards. Ask each person to name 1-2 people by name that they trust and would tell if someone tried to hurt them. Make up personal safety cards, which include the name and phone numbers of their emergency person.

Tell participants that if they tell someone and that person does not believe them, they must tell someone else. It is important to keep telling what happened to more and more people until someone believes you.