

## STEP 1: CHECK-IN

The SENDER tells the RECEIVER that he/she would like to have a dialogue and checks to see if the RECEIVER is ready (e.g. "I want to talk. Is now a good time?") If the RECEIVER isn't ready, schedule a specific time to have the discussion (e.g. "I'm in a hurry to get to work. Can we talk tonight after dinner?"). If the RECEIVER is ready, both sit down to talk, making eye contact and eliminating distractions (e.g. TV, cell phone, etc.).

## STEP 2: EXPRESS THE CONCERN

The SENDER expresses a concern using I-statements, keeping the statement brief and concise.

**I-Statement:** I feel/felt \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_  
(feeling word) (brief description of RECEIVER'S behavior)  
because \_\_\_\_\_. I want/wish you (or I'd prefer/like/rather) \_\_\_\_\_.  
(reason for the SENDER'S feeling) (what the SENDER wants to be different)  
(e.g. "I felt lonely and frustrated when you went out with your friends last night because we haven't spent much time with each other lately. I want to do more with you.")

## STEP 3: MIRROR

The RECEIVER repeats what he/she heard the SENDER say.  
(e.g. "So if I heard you right, you \_\_\_\_\_. Is that right?"  
(repeats the SENDER's I-statement)

The SENDER would decide whether or not the RECEIVER got the message. If not, the SENDER would re-state the concern until the RECEIVER can mirror it correctly. If the RECEIVER is confused, he/she can ask questions.

## STEP 4: VALIDATE

The RECEIVER tells the SENDER about what makes sense to the RECEIVER.

(e.g. "That makes sense to me because \_\_\_\_\_. "I can see how you would \_\_\_\_\_. "  
"I agree with you that \_\_\_\_\_.")

## STEP 5: SWITCH

Ask the SENDER if he/she is done. If so, the RECEIVER becomes the SENDER, and the process repeats, allowing both parties to be heard, understood, and validated.

**IF EITHER THE SENDER OR RECEIVER BECOMES FLOODED, TAKE A TIME-OUT FOR 30-45 MINUTES TO SELF-SOOTHE. THEN PICK UP WHERE YOU LEFT OFF.**