



keepin' it **REAL**



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The keepin' it REAL (kiR) Curriculum



An Innovative Approach to Substance Abuse Prevention

The keepin' it REAL curriculum represents over 20 years of research conducted by the Drug Resistance Strategies Project to understand more about how our youth make choices concerning alcohol and other drugs. Out of this research a school-based substance abuse prevention program, keepin' it REAL, was developed collaboratively by Penn State University, Arizona State University, and schools around the country. Grounded in cultural norms and values, the program teaches youth how to live drug-free lives confidently, drawing on their personal strengths and the strengths of their families and communities.

The acronym REAL is its central message and teaches four ways to refuse alcohol, tobacco and other drug offers -- Refuse, Explain, Avoid, and Leave. The curriculum teaches students how to say no by presenting practical drug resistance strategies that are easy for them to remember and use. These strategies help youth stay away from drugs by preparing them to act decisively and comfortably in a difficult situation. Students also learn how to recognize risk, value their perceptions and feelings, and make choices that support their values.

This innovative, culturally-grounded curriculum was developed to allow students to recognize themselves in the prevention message. Instructors are trained to implement the curriculum effectively in their classrooms. The objective of the keepin' it REAL curriculum is to reduce substance abuse by teaching risk assessment, decision-making and valuable communication and life skills.

A Program that Speaks to Students

The keepin' it REAL curriculum is organized as a ten-week program. Each of the ten lessons requires one 45 minute class period and is designed to promote interaction between students and teachers. Student centered activities are included to involve students in their learning and allow them to practice REAL resistance strategies. The program's key learning tool is a series of videos involving high school youth and based on students' real stories. The videos demonstrate how students have used REAL strategies to resist drugs in real life situations.

keepin' it REAL Works in the Real World

keepin' it REAL was implemented in 35 middle schools in Phoenix, Arizona. Over 6,700 students participated in the evaluation showing that keepin' it REAL reduces alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use, teaches anti-drug norms and changes attitudes and expectations. As a result, keepin' it REAL was selected as an evidence based program by SAMHSA and is listed on the National Registry of Effective Programs.

The keepin' it REAL (kiR) Curriculum



Notes to the Instructor

The skills of the keepin' it REAL curriculum that you will be teaching are tools that will help students successfully negotiate everyday life. Many students are unaware of the power of their own words and actions and the role “choice” plays in their lives. By helping students become aware of risks and teaching them how to make effective decisions using “Refuse,” “Explain,” “Avoid,” and “Leave,” they become empowered, and can be proactive in responding to situations that might otherwise be difficult for them.

Each of the REAL strategies is taught in an individual, video-supported lesson to allow students to explore the many aspects of a particular strategy. Activities have been created to help students practice the strategy. Students have the opportunity to learn how and when to “Refuse,” “Explain,” “Avoid,” and “Leave.” The instructor has the opportunity to incorporate the background and experiences of the students into the discussions in making REAL strategies a part of students’ repertoire of decision-making and communication skills.

Please keep the following in mind as you carefully prepare each lesson:

- *Each lesson contains instructions, activity pages, Presentation Pages/PowerPoint, and homework.*
- *Be a listener.*
- *Facilitate discussions that actively engage students in thinking about ways to solve their own problems.*
- *Use students’ examples, their words, and their experiences in discussions.*
- *Encourage students to take ownership of the new skills.*

Overview of Lessons



LESSON 1: OPTIONS AND CHOICES

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the purpose of the keepin' it REAL curriculum
2. Recognize that what you do may have favorable or unfavorable consequences
3. Differentiate between simple preference and “wise choice” – a choice that is well thought out

LESSON 2: RISKS

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify risks that could be potentially harmful
2. Identify risks present in a situation
3. Identify risks present in seemingly safe situations

LESSON 3: COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase skill in verbalizing preferences that are not popular
2. Understand that you can acknowledge others' views without agreeing with them

LESSON 4: REFUSE

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand that there are ways of saying “no” that are clear without humiliating others
2. Demonstrate (through video materials made by high school youth) ways of saying “no” that are clear without humiliating others
3. Increase skill in saying “no” in ways that are clear without humiliating others

LESSON 5: EXPLAIN

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand that there are ways of explaining reasons for actions in a way that everyone understands them
2. Demonstrate (through video materials made by high school youth) ways of explaining the reasons for actions in an understandable way
3. Increase skill at explaining reasons for actions in an understandable way

Overview of Lessons



LESSON 6: AVOID

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand that there are ways of staying away from situations you don't want to be around
2. Demonstrate (through video materials made by high school youth) ways of staying away from situations you don't want to be around
3. Increase skill in staying away from situations you don't want to be around

LESSON 7: LEAVE

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how to get away from something that is undesirable or harmful
2. Demonstrate (through video materials made by high school youth) how to get away from something that is undesirable or harmful
3. Increase skill in getting away from something that is undesirable or harmful

LESSON 8: NORMS

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify choices that are in your best interest and show consideration for others you care about
2. Understand norms of drug use by kids your age
3. Understand what it means to value yourself

LESSON 9: FEELINGS

OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize that even if you are a part of a group, you have your own unique feelings and reactions to every situation
2. Understand that your feelings are valid even if others don't agree

LESSON 10: SUPPORT NETWORKS

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify ways to get help/support when needed
2. Identify and describe their personal social support networks

Lesson 3: Communication and Conflict

OBJECTIVES

- Be able to verbalize preferences that are not popular
- Acknowledge others' views without agreeing with them

preparation

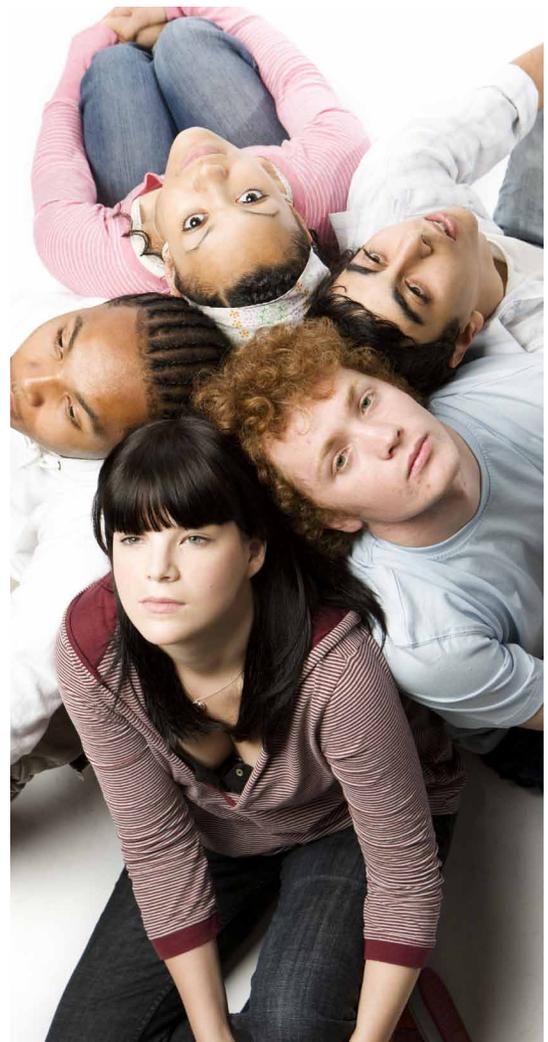
- Read through the lesson
- Familiarize yourself with Lesson 3 objectives
- Think through the following student activities:
 - *Introductory discussion questions*
 - *PRACTICE WITH I STATEMENTS*

MATERIALS

- Student copies of the CONFLICT STORIES
- PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE Presentation Pages/PowerPoint
- I STATEMENTS Presentation Pages/PowerPoint
- Presentation Pages marker
- Student copies of the PRACTICE WITH I STATEMENTS worksheet
- Student copies of the SINGING ABOUT CONFLICT homework sheet

LESSON STRUCTURE

Activity 1 Review	5 minutes
Activity 2 Introductory Discussion	3 minutes
Activity 3 Conflict Stories	8 minutes
Activity 4 Discussion and Assertiveness Activity	8 minutes
Activity 5 Practice with "I Statements" Activity	12 minutes
Activity 6 Conclusion	2 minutes
Activity 7 Homework	2 minutes



Lesson 3: Communication and Conflict



key terms

AGGRESSIVENESS:

Acting in a way that communicates a lack of consideration toward others. It often involves attacking others without regard for their feelings.

“AGREE TO DISAGREE”:

A decision made between two or more people after they have arrived at the conclusion that they have differing opinions and they will not be able to agree.

ASSERTIVENESS:

Acting in a way that communicates confidence and respect for others.

CONFLICT:

To be in opposition or disagreement.

CONSEQUENCE:

The result of a choice.

“I STATEMENT”

A statement that can be used to express clearly in an assertive manner how one feels or what one thinks.

PASSIVENESS:

Acting in a way that communicates timidity and unwillingness to stand up for oneself. It often involves a lack of action on one's part that allows others to take advantage.

SELF-DETERMINATION:

Making decisions for oneself. It also involves putting one's mind to something and sticking to decisions.

WISE CHOICE:

A choice that is well thought out.

Lesson 3: Communication and Conflict

ACTIVITY 1 (5 minutes)

REVIEW

1. Review the homework from last week's lesson. Call on two or three students to report the risks they identified for morning, afternoon, and evening.
2. Collect the homework sheets.
3. Make the connection between last week's lesson and what students will be learning in today's lesson. Do so by stating that although some risk taking is not a good idea, sometimes we must take a risk in our relationships with others if we want to express our views and stick to our own decisions.



ACTIVITY 2 (3 minutes)

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

1. Present the objectives of today's lesson:
 - Sometimes we have to make choices that are not popular with other people.
 - There are ways of acknowledging other people's views without necessarily agreeing with them.
2. Ask students why these might be skills that would be good to know. Facilitate a student-led discussion about these skills. Other possible questions to ask and discuss are:
 - In what situations do you think these skills would be helpful?
 - Do you ever have times when you feel like your opinion isn't the popular one?
 - Do you ever have conflicts or disagreements with people who have different opinions than you?
 - Do you know anyone who's good at acknowledging other peoples' views without having to agree with them?
 - Have you ever heard of the phrase "agree to disagree?"
3. Explain that "agree to disagree" means to decide not to agree with someone and to be OK with not agreeing.

Lesson 3: Communication and Conflict

ACTIVITY 3 (8 minutes)

CONFLICT STORIES

1. Distribute the CONFLICT STORIES worksheets to the students.
2. Ask students to read the stories individually and then rank them in order of what they think is the most effective (1) to least effective (5) way of handling conflict situations.
3. Facilitate a class discussion of their responses, exploring why they would find one method to be effective and another less effective. Have them identify which story, if any, provided examples of verbalizing preferences in a way that maintains respect for others and oneself.
4. Remind them that there are consequences for each way of handling the situations. Explore what students think some of the consequences might be for the people in the stories.

Possible questions to ask and discuss are:

- What are possible consequences in each story?
 - Which consequences would be good and which consequences would be bad?
 - What are possible results for each story?
 - What could they have done differently?
5. Inform the students that they will be referring back to the stories after the next part of this lesson.

instructor note:

The CONFLICT STORIES worksheets show both good and bad examples of verbalizing preferences and acknowledging others' views without agreeing with them.

instructor note:

Students may want to know if their answers are “correct” or “incorrect.” Remind them that, at this point, there are no “correct” answers. The purpose of this discussion is to help the students explore the reasons why they think some methods are effective and others are ineffective. After the introduction of the concept of assertiveness in the next part of this lesson, you will be able to refer students back to these scenarios to further evaluate them.

ACTIVITY 4 (8 minutes)

DISCUSSION AND ASSERTIVENESS

1. Introduce the concept of **self-determination**. Explain self-determination as “making your own decisions.” Ask students how many of them think they make their own decisions most of the time.
2. Ask students how it makes them feel to make their own decisions. If they make a bad decision they probably won't feel so good about it or about themselves. But, if they make a good decision they'll probably feel good about themselves and feel like they're in control of their own lives.
3. Discuss the idea that even though we might make our own decisions, sometimes we may have trouble communicating those

instructor note:

Use the Presentation Pages by starting with the individual words “Assertive,” “Passive,” and “Aggressive,” and let the students try to define them. Write definitions following each word. Then move down to the behavior characteristics.

decisions to others. We may not communicate our decisions very well. For example, we may be too weak or too strong in telling others what we've decided. But, if we are able to make good decisions and express those to others in a way that is not too strong or too weak, then we will feel good about ourselves, feel like we're in control of our lives, and feel confident and in control with others. Present this way of expressing ourselves as **assertiveness**.

instructor note:

Make sure the students identify the stories correctly as follows: Passive behavior – stories 1 and 4; Aggressive behavior – story 3; Assertive behavior – stories 2 and 5.

4. Use the PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE Presentation Pages/ PowerPoint to discuss the differences between **assertiveness** and **passiveness** or **aggressiveness**. Focus on assertiveness as being the most successful way of dealing with others.
5. Refer students back to their CONFLICT STORIES. Ask them to identify which scenarios show examples of passive behavior, aggressive behavior, and assertive behavior. Discuss with students the idea that we can be assertive and still be respectful. This might be important to remember when dealing with family members or people who are older than us. Ask them if they think it is possible to share their feelings and express their views in a respectful manner. Explain that standing up for ourselves doesn't mean we have to be rude or inconsiderate. It only means that we know where we stand and we're able to express how we feel to others when needed.
6. Summarize assertiveness as follows: When we act assertively we are reminding ourselves and communicating to others that our feelings are okay and we make our own decisions.

ACTIVITY 5 (12 minutes)

PRACTICE WITH "I STATEMENTS" ACTIVITY

1. Introduce the "I Statement" as one of the best tools for being assertive in communicating preferences or acknowledging others' views without agreeing with them.
2. Use the I STATEMENTS Presentation Pages/PowerPoint to illustrate the "I statement." Explain the "I Statement" as a way of expressing how we feel or what we think by starting a statement with the word "I" and following it with the words "feel____" "think____" "want____" or whatever. The general pattern is something like: "I feel____when/ because____" or "I think____about____."
3. Leave up the "I STATEMENTS" Presentation Pages/PowerPoint slide to assist students with the next activity, the PRACTICE WITH I STATEMENTS worksheet.
4. Have students get into pairs and distribute a PRACTICE WITH I STATEMENTS worksheet to each student. Guide the students to follow the instructions on their worksheets as they complete the worksheet sections individually and in pairs as directed.
5. Have several students share with the class "I Statements" they heard from their partner.



Lesson 3: Communication and Conflict

ACTIVITY 6 (2 minutes)

CONCLUSION

1. Call on several students to identify one important idea or technique they learned from today's lesson.
2. Ask students to identify techniques they have learned that can help them let others know they're important to them even if they've chosen not to do what those people want them to do.
3. Review the following concepts by asking students:
 - Can you identify the differences between assertive, passive, and aggressive behavior?
 - How would you verbalize preferences that aren't popular using the "I Statement"?
 - Give an example of how we can acknowledge others' views without agreeing with them using an "I Statement"
4. Thank students for their participation.



ACTIVITY 7 (2 minutes)

HOMEWORK

1. Distribute the SINGING ABOUT CONFLICT homework sheets.
2. Read over the directions with the students.
3. Provide examples to students if needed. A possible example is as follows:
 - (a) "Shake it off" by Taylor Swift.
 - (b) In this song, she is singing about ignoring the haters and telling us to shake it off.
 - (c) Her response to conflict is most likely assertive because she is willing to stand up for herself, but not in a way that might make others angry. Advising herself (and us) to ignore the haters and move on. She expresses her views clearly and directly.
 - (d) Not needed. (I would not change it. Sometimes you have to have confidence and ignore the haters.)
 - (e) She does state the others' points of view respectfully and not in anger. But provides different meanings behind her behaviors for the others to consider.

Presentation Pages

Passive

Characteristics

- Unwilling to stand up for yourself
- Not saying what you want
- Not telling others how you feel
- Letting others decide what is best for you

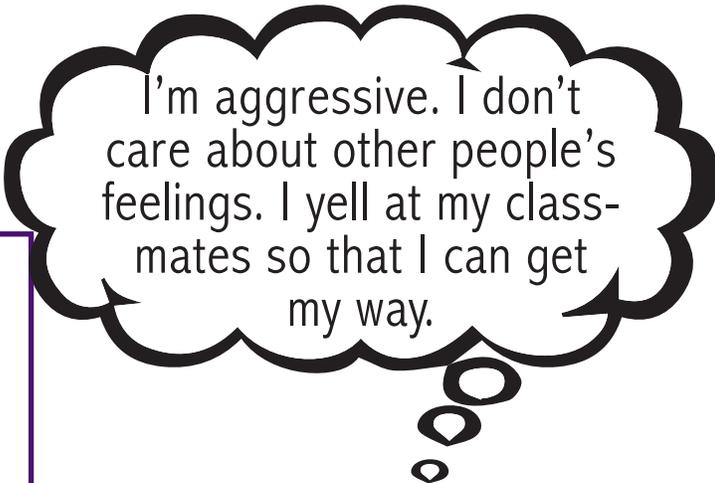
I'm passive. I talk softly. I get "stepped on" by my classmates because I never stand up for myself



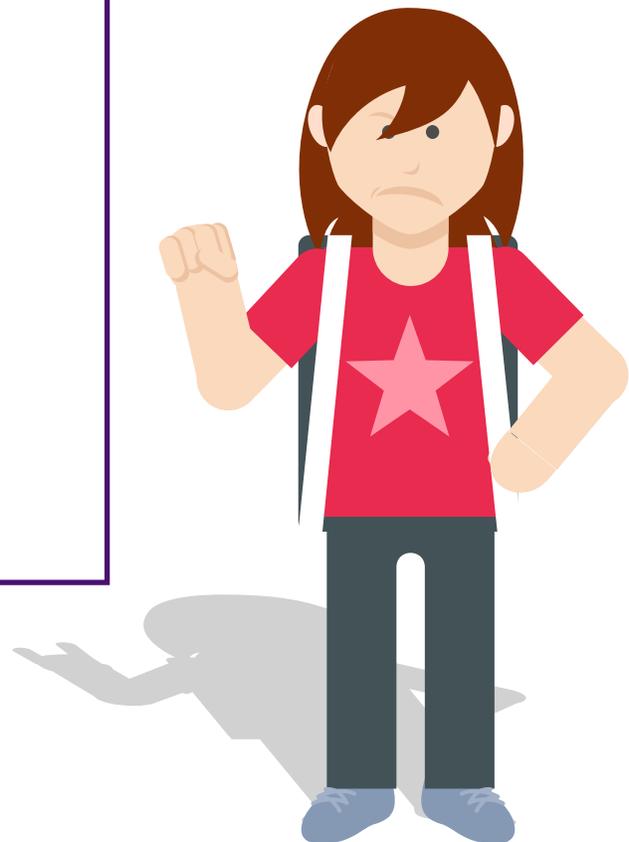
Aggressive

Characteristics

- Attempting to get your own way without consideration for others
- Attacking others by putting them down or “bullying” them



I'm aggressive. I don't care about other people's feelings. I yell at my classmates so that I can get my way.



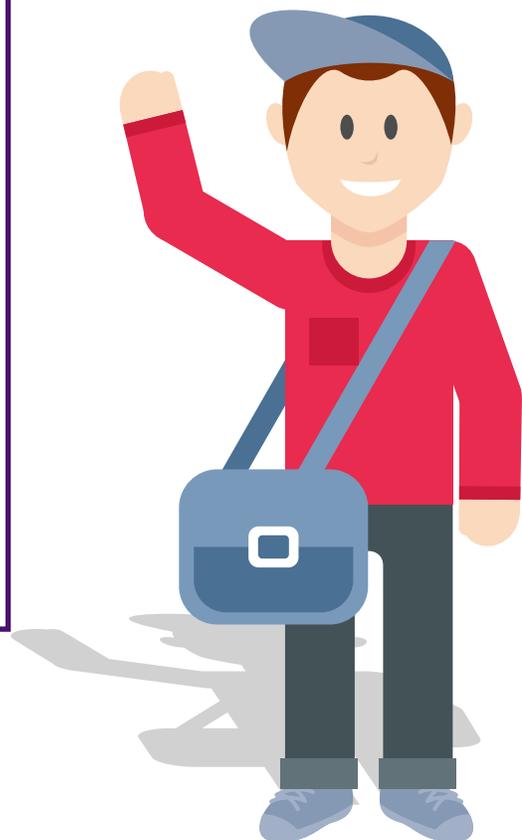
Assertive

Characteristics

- Willing to stand up for yourself
- Willing to share your feelings
- Being respectful of other people's rights and feelings



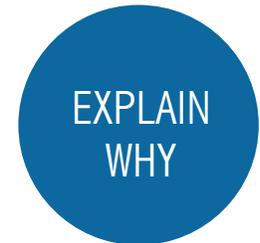
I'm assertive. I communicate my feelings clearly and respectfully to friends and family. I stand up for myself!



What are I Statements?

- **I Statements can be used to express how you feel or what you think.**
- **Start with the word “I” and follow with either the word “feel” or “think.”**

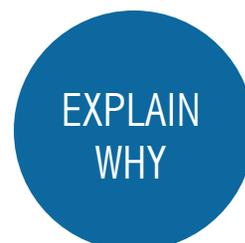
Example I Statements



I feel _____ when _____ because _____.

I feel **upset** when **you make fun of Sara** because **she's my friend**.

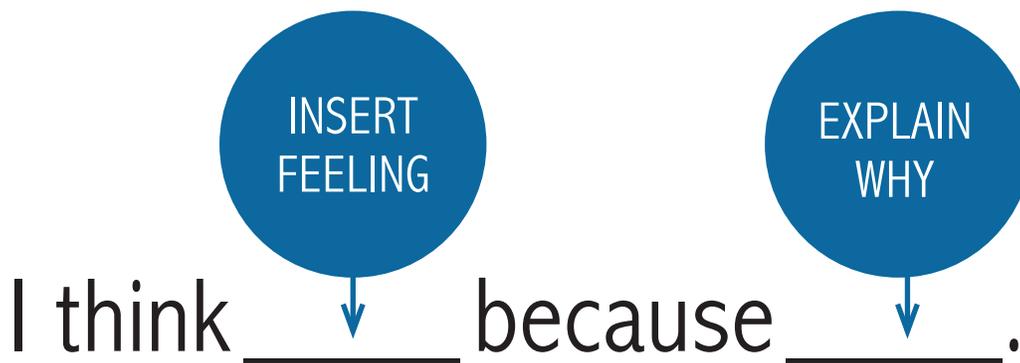
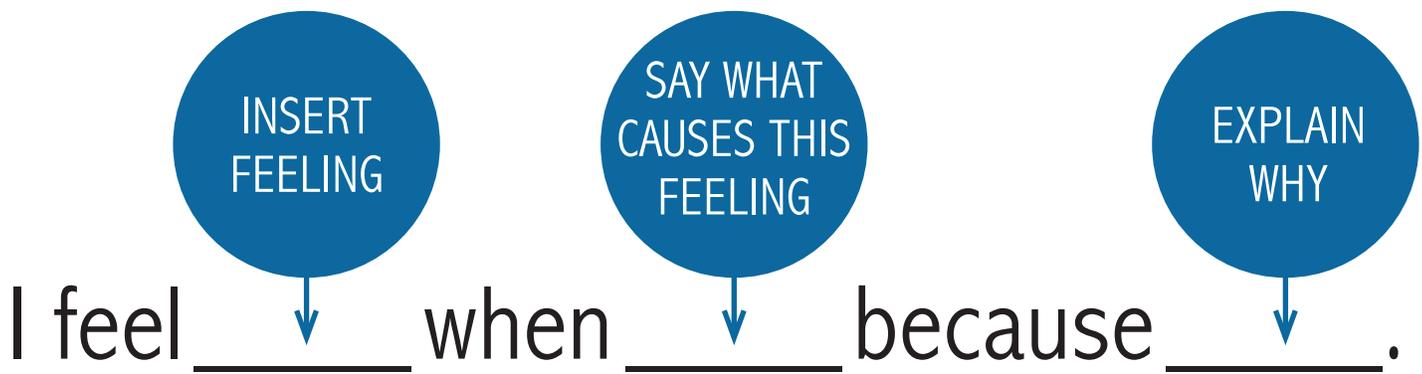
I feel **annoyed** when **you offer me cigarettes** because **you know that I am not a person who would do that**.



I think _____ because _____.

I think **fishing is boring** because **all you do is sit and wait**.

Review of Basic I Statement Structure



Handouts and Homework

Conflict Stories

Directions: Read through each story below. Notice the way that the main characters choose to handle their conflict situations. After you have read all 5 stories, rank them from the best to the worst way to handle a conflict situation. Put a #1 by the best way, a #2 by the next best way, and keep going until you put a #5 by what you think is the worst way to handle a conflict situation.

Story 1:

Jessie is on lunch break at school when a girl she knows walks up to her with her group of friends and says that she heard Jessie was talking bad about her and spreading rumors about her. Jessie wasn't spreading rumors about her, but she's pretty scared by this girl and her friends. She looks down at the ground and says "Sorry."

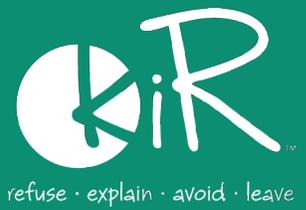
Story 2:

Carmen and A.J. are boyfriend and girlfriend. It's a Friday night and they are over at A.J.'s house. His cousins come over with a couple of six packs of beer and start drinking. They ask A.J. and Carmen to join them. A.J. seems to be OK with this, but Carmen feels really uncomfortable. She pulls A.J. aside and says "I know they're your cousins and I like them, but I don't want to drink. Why don't we either go somewhere else or I can call to get a ride home."

Story 3:

Chris is at soccer practice one day after school and his team is playing a scrimmage against another team. The other team just scored a goal against Chris' team and Chris is really mad at his goalie. His teammates tell the goalie that they'll get the point back and not to worry about it, but Chris seems to think that the goal was all the goalie's fault. He goes up to the goalie, gets right in his face, and yells "You are the worst player on this team! Don't you know we are all depending on you?!"

Lesson 3: Communication Skills



Story 4:

Mike works at a grocery store on the weekends. One Saturday before he started his shift, he overheard two employees talking about stealing money from the cash register. The next day Mike's boss confronts him and accuses him of taking the money. Mike did not do it and he has a pretty good idea who did. However, his boss sounds convinced that he took it. Mike figures he won't be able to change his boss' mind. When the boss asks him again if he took the money, Mike just nods his head yes.

Story 5:

Laura is hanging out talking with her friends when one of them suggests that they cut school the next day to go to the mall. Everyone except Laura seems to think this is a good idea, and they start making plans about how they're going to get out of school. Laura speaks up and says "Listen, I don't think that's such a good idea. I know you guys want to go to the mall, but why don't we wait until Saturday and then we can spend the whole day there without getting in trouble."

Ranking: Rank the stories (#s 1-5) in order of what you think was (1) the best way to handle a conflict situation to (5) the worst way to handle a conflict situation.

Story 1 _____

Story 2 _____

Story 3 _____

Story 4 _____

Story 5 _____

Practice with “I Statements”

Directions: While you’re doing this worksheet, look at the “I Statements” Presentation Pages for examples to help you.

PART I:

Think of 3 things you like to do or prefer that aren’t necessarily popular. Write these down in the following spaces:

Now share these preferences with your partner in the form of “I statements.” (“I like ____ because ____”.)

PART II:

Complete the following incomplete sentences on your own:

1. I think the best football team is _____
because _____.
2. I think the best movie is _____
because _____.
3. I feel _____ when I dance in front of people
because _____.
4. I think the best song ever is _____
because _____.
5. I feel _____ when I have to stand up in front
of the class because _____.

Lesson 3: Communication Skills



Now, with your partner, read your “I statements” to each other. Circle the sentences for which you have different answers. (If all your sentences are alike then change three of them to be different.) Now take turns combining your “I statements” to practice acknowledging each others’ views without having to agree. Use the following formats:

“I understand that you think _____ because _____, but I think _____ because _____.”

OR

“So you feel _____ when _____ because _____, but I feel _____ because _____.”

PART III: The following sentences are examples of either passive or aggressive ways to say things. Change each of the responses into assertive “I statements.” Write the “I statement” in the space provided. You can work alone or with your partner.

To your friend: “You’re always doing stupid stuff that I get blamed for!”

| _____

To someone who just insulted you: “Maybe you’re right – maybe I am a loser.”

| _____

To your brother or sister: “You idiot! Stop changing the TV channels!”

| _____

Singing About Conflict

Directions: Find a song that you like (it can be any type of music) in which someone is having a conflict with someone else. The conflict could be about anything - it could involve a fight, a disagreement, or just a difference in opinion. While you're listening to the song, pay close attention to whether or not the people having the conflict are able to acknowledge each others' views without agreeing with each other. Once you've listened to the song all the way through, answer the following questions:

1. What is the name of the song and the artist?

2. What happens in the song? What is the conflict?

3. Is the main character's response aggressive, passive or assertive? Why?

4. If his or her response is aggressive or passive, how could you change it to be assertive?

5. How could the characters acknowledge each other's views without agreeing with each other? Give an example.
