

What is an “I” Message?

I feel _____ when you _____ because _____. Would you please?

An “I” message is a statement about a problem that tells why from the speaker’s personal perspective. An “I” message often also includes a request for a change in behavior.

How do “I” Messages differ from “You” Messages?

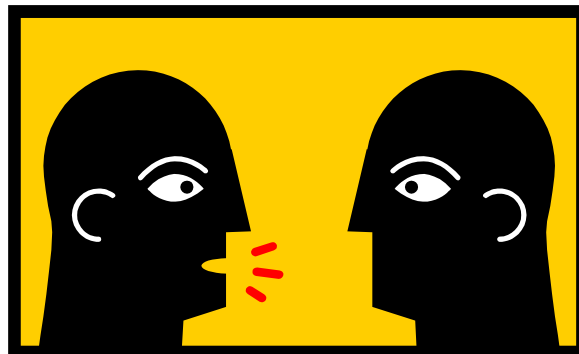
“You” messages start with an accusation and often suggest blame. More often than not, when confronted by “You” messages individuals tend to become defensive and further discussion may be compromised.

How could “I” messages improve a teen court hearing with a peer offender?

“I” messages can improve a teen court hearing with a peer offender by offering a personal viewpoint to elicit more information. “I” messages help remove the feeling of blame to create a less defensive, more productive and cohesive atmosphere to promote change. A panelist can offer an “I” message to better relate and form a connection with the offender.

What are some examples of focusing on self in Teen Court?

- I am frustrated by what you just said because I am not sure it’s truthful...
- My experience has been...
- I’m having a difficult time understanding how that happened. Could you tell me more?
- I want to see you be successful in Teen Court, therefore, I would like you to...
- Sometimes when I have been in a similar situation...



Are you leading or loading when questioning?

Leading questions suggest a particular answer that the questioner is looking for and can often be answered with a yes or no. A person may simply agree or disagree with what is being asked. Loaded questions imply some facts that have not been previously established and include emotionally-charged words. Loaded questions are many times also leading questions.

Leading questions

- Did your friend tell you to take the item?
- Were you mad or angry?
- Did they tell you not to tell anyone?

Loaded questions

- Have you quit smoking?
- Don't you think you should apologize?
- Are you going to do that violation again?

Try using "I" messages to change the leading and loaded questions above into thoughtful and effective questions and/or statements that could help an offender feel comfortable as well as help panelists learn more information for deliberation.