

I-Statements are useful verbal tools for individuals of any age. There are numerous ways to structure I-Statements, but the message usually has three parts, which can be re-ordered as needed.

1) I feel... (emotion)

2) when... (event/situation or behaviour)

3) because... (thought or additional feeling about the situation)

People of all ages can use these messages, and seeing this type of communication modeled can help children understand people's emotions and the impact their own behavior may have on others. Depending on the situation a positive request can be added at the end. This can take the form of "I would like/appreciate if...", which outlines the desired change in behavior.

An example of an I-message from a parent could be:

*"I feel annoyed when you don't turn your music down, because I couldn't hear and we had agreed that the volume would be kept down when I am on the phone", rather than "You never consider others and don't do as you're asked".*

An I-message from a child to a friend or sibling could be:

*"I feel angry when you take my Xbox without asking because I don't want other people to play with it when I am not around. I would like you to ask me if you want to play".*

I-Statements can help de-escalate situations and resolve conflicts, as they allow for less critical, judgmental and accusatory conversations. They also empower children to explore their feelings and communicate them verbally in a safe and respectful manner.