

INFORMATION SHEET

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

What we say, how we say it, and what we mean by it are extremely important, and can be life-changing. There are skills and attributes which can be learnt to support good communication – two fundamentals are the use of 'I Statements', and Active Listening

THE USE OF 'I STATEMENTS':

'I Statements' frame communication around owning your own feelings, reactions and needs, rather than someone's behaviour or comments. For example, compare and contrast these two statements, noting your emotional reaction to them:

- 'You should get a Mirena, they're great!'
- 'I love my Mirena and would recommend them to others'

Which statement is easiest to hear?

To request a change in behaviour or to express a need, follow a simple formula:

1. Start 'When you....' to make factual, specific statement of a situation
2. State 'I feel/felt....' to recognise the feeling that arose from your perception of events
3. (Optional): 'Because....' this can be helpful to clarify the source of your feeling
4. Finish with 'What I want/need....' to specifically ask for what you need, which could include a change in behaviour
5. Wait, non-judgementally, for a response.
6. Utilise 'Active Listening' (see below) when they respond
7. If you need to, encourage the other person to utilise the same formula so you can each state your needs and reactions to gain a mutual understanding.

ACTIVE LISTENING:

Active listening is an aid to positive conversations which involves listening attentively while suspending judgement and advice. The reference to active is important – this style of listening involves more than 'listening passively' and moves away from 'critical listening' which is judgemental. Active listening is simple and very effective. Here are the steps:

- Pay attention to the speaker – it is important to be fully immersed in what they are saying by suspending judgement, being patient and giving the speaker your undivided and empathetic attention. It is important to not 'jump in' with your opinions and ideas.
- Paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said – this step can be particularly useful if the points made were long or complex. At this point, by summarising what you think you heard, you can check and seek clarification or simply validate what they said. An 'I statement' such as 'I think I heard you say...' or 'I want to check I understand...' can be useful as it demonstrates that you are taking ownership of your part in the conversation.

For further information:

- Insight Endometriosis: Endo 101 Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Endometriosis Symptoms Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Diagnosing Endometriosis Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Advocating for Yourself Information Sheet
- Insight Endometriosis Code of Health Services Consumer's Rights Information Sheet

References:

- Effective health behaviour change in long term conditions - A review of New Zealand and international evidence 2012 <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/effective-health-behaviour-change-long-term-conditions.pdf>
- Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights: <https://www.hdc.org.nz/your-rights/about-the-code/code-of-health-and-disability-services-consumers-rights/>
- Active Listening: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-active-listening-3024343>

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