

## ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION METHOD

### “I” statements



With this method of communication, we **own** the feelings caused by other people's behaviour. This gives us control over the conversation as nobody can tell us what to feel. It does not matter whether the other person believes those feelings are justified or not – they have to accept the fact that we have those feelings caused by their behaviour. Their behaviour is not our responsibility, it's theirs!

#### **Part A - address the other person's BEHAVIOUR**

Focus on a person's behaviour, so what a person is doing (or has done), rather than a statement of who they are. For example, a comment like “you are impatient” usually ends up with the other person becoming defensive or angry and will not result in productive communication, i.e. a dialogue.

Refrain from using absolutisms such as “you never...”, “you always...”, this is also likely to cause the other person to become defensive.

**Part B – inform the other person how you feel about their behaviour**

Before starting the conversation think well about how their behaviour affects your feelings.

To ensure the conversation is as effective as possible, wait for an appropriate place and time to start such as a private setting.

So, to use continue with the above example, start by saying, “When you behave in an impatient way with me, I feel sad/rejected/disrespected/angry/unsupported”, or whatever feelings you will have identified beforehand.

Stay away from statements like “you **make** me feel...”. The truth is nobody can **make** you feel anything, it is always your choice and in your power what to feel.

#### **Part C – request and suggest different behaviour**

##### Example 1

“When you behave in an impatient way with me, I feel rejected, **can you please take control of your anger.**”

##### Example 2

“When you ask me for favours repeatedly, I feel used, **can you please stop.**”