

3. Talking Tips

OBJECTIVE: Learn a communication skill to help share, clarify, and resolve issues in the family.

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS:

Talking Tips Wheel Handout

USING THE TALKING TIPS: I Want New Sneakers! Handout

TALKING POINTS:

When do we have our most difficult times being with the people who are important to us? When we're upset with them! Something they said, or did not say, hurts us. Something they did, or did not do, angers us. Suddenly, we're lost. We don't know what's going on with them, or where we stand, or what to say, or how to say it. So what finally happens? If we're not careful (and it's not easy to be careful when we're so upset), we do something or say something that makes a bad situation even worse.

ACTIVITY:

The Talking Tips method is a simple, 10-step process for talking that you're about to learn.

It offers you the chance to avoid that kind of situation. It's a sensible way of letting other people know what's bothering you.

Present the benefits of the Talking Tips method:

- It helps you know what to say and how to say it, so that you don't have to suffer in silence.
- It helps you to express what's bothering you without making the other person feel bad or angry.
- It helps you to be clear and specific, so that the other person understands the problem better.
- It helps you realize more about why you are angry, hurt, or frustrated, so that you can get over these feelings and keep them from happening again.
- It helps the other person to know you better and respect you more, which means that the other person will be more interested in helping you.

Present how the Talking Tips process works:

Hand out the Talking Tips wheel. Explain that the Talking Tips process takes you through 10 steps to talk about what's bothering you.

- Explain that each step begins with a different "I" phrase that focuses on just one part of the problem. For example, the first phrase, "I notice...". Using that phrase, participants complete the sentence to fit the situation. "I notice..." is about a noticeable behavior, not an assumed feeling or a thought. Focus on the behavior signals that portray that a certain feeling is there. For example, rather than stating, "I notice you are angry when I'm on the phone..." it would be "I notice that when you see me on the phone you frown and walk away quickly."

- Let the class know that sometimes several “notice” sentences help to clarify the situation. Speakers can add another sentence or two about what they “notice” before moving on to the next phrase (“I assume...”). Encourage speakers to be as brief and direct as they can. Remember, several other statements are coming up. The most important part of the process is to talk about just one issue at a time, staying with the same problem.
- Keep moving through the phrases. For the next phrase “I assume this means...”, now say what you assume the behavior means. Go through each phrase in order, without skipping a phrase, until the last one (“I hope...”).
- This 10-step approach makes sure that all the important points are spoken, and that the other person has every chance to understand and appreciate all the facets of what is bothering the speaker.



Once the entire 10-step Talking Tips process is explained, go through the example given on the handout **I Want New Sneakers!**

Ask the class to split up into pairs or couples. Ask each pair to come up with a common money complaint in their family. Ask them to develop 10 “I statements” explaining the issue based on the Talking Tips process. Encourage pairs to share their scenarios with the class.

Encourage participants to go home and use the Talking Tips methods with their partner or other family members. Discuss that there are ways that they can prepare for going through the process that will lead to greater success. Go over six actions they can take to help the conversation be successful:

- Pick a good time to talk. Find a time when you and the other person have at least a half-hour free to do nothing else but talk and listen to each other.
- Find a good place to talk, somewhere you can have privacy, quiet, and comfort.
- Tell the other person that you have something you want to talk about. If you want, you can say you want to use a special guide for talking that you think would help.
- Ask the other person if he or she would be willing to listen to you talk about something--to hear you out--without interrupting. This is very important. Ask if the person would be willing to repeat back to you what they heard you say, without discussion or comment. Tell the other person you'll do the same thing in return after you've finished talking.
- If the other person agrees to do this, say that you will let him or her know when you have completed what you wanted to say.
- A great feature of the Talking Tips is that you can, if you want, plan ahead of time what you would like to say and use the same format to write it out until you are clear about what you feel and what you want to say.