

We CAN Communicate

Calm Assertive Noticing

We can help each other communicate by making room for both of us to speak and to listen.

1 Stay with the here and now

In earlier conversations, old feelings or experiences may have influenced how we understood what was happening in the moment.

I can notice when something from the past has been stirred up and ask myself:

What am I responding to in this conversation, and what might be coming from something earlier?

I keep my attention on what is happening between us now.

2 Speak from "I"

In earlier conversations, blaming "you" statements - especially "you always" or "you never" - may have left us defending ourselves rather than really listening.

If we want to be heard, we are more likely to get through when we speak from "I" rather than use blaming "you" statements.

"I" language helps me explain **HOW** I feel about something, **WHEN** I feel that way, **WHY** I feel that way and **WHAT** I would prefer.

I feel _____
(emotion)

When you _____
(specific behaviour or situation)

I would prefer _____
(clear request)

"I feel hurt when you make plans that affect us both without checking with me. I would prefer that we talk about them together first."

- I take time to recognise what I am feeling about what is happening **now**, before I express it.
- I say **one thing** at a time.
- I stay **specific and focused** on the behaviour or situation in the now.
- I describe what happened **clearly**, without "you always" or "you never".
- I say what I would **prefer**.

3 Listen to understand

- I give my partner my **attention** and show that I want to hear them.
- I ask **questions** when I need more information or do not understand.
- Before I respond, I check that I have **understood**. I say back, in my own words, what I have heard and give my partner the chance to correct my understanding of what they meant.
- I keep **listening**, even if I notice difficult feelings arising in me while my partner is talking.

CAN: Calm Assertive Noticing

This reminder is for relationships where both people can speak, disagree and make choices freely and safely. Where there is coercion, intimidation, threats, violence or abuse, safety and appropriate specialist support take priority.