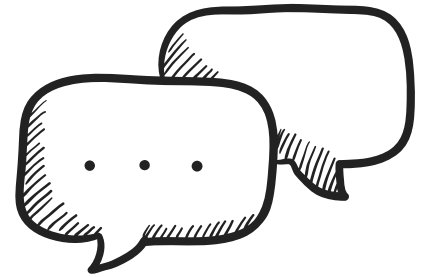


# HEALTHY COMMUNICATION



A practical guide to communicating clearly, calmly and respectfully—even during difficult conversations.

## STEP 1: PAUSE BEFORE YOU SPEAK

**Before responding, ask yourself:**

- Am I calm enough to speak respectfully?
  - Do I understand what I'm feeling?
  - Is this a good time to talk, or do I need a break?
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## STEP 2: NAME WHAT YOU'RE FEELING

**Anger often covers other emotions:** ☐ Frustrated ☐ Hurt ☐ Overwhelmed ☐ Disrespected

☐ Anxious ☐ Angry ☐ Sad ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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## STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE SITUATION (FACTS ONLY)

**Describe what happened without blaming or exaggerating:**

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## STEP 4: USE AN "I FEEL" STATEMENT

**I feel** \_\_\_\_\_ **when** \_\_\_\_\_ **because** \_\_\_\_\_

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## STEP 5: STATE WHAT YOU NEED

**Be clear and realistic about what you need or are asking for:**

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## STEP 6: LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

**While the other person speaks:**

- ☐ Do not interrupt ☐ Listen to understand ☐ Reflect back what you hear

**What I heard them say:**

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## STEP 7: CHOOSE A HEALTHY RESPONSE

☐ Continue discussion ☐ Take a break ☐ Ask for clarification ☐ Agree on next steps ☐ Seek Support

**My next step:**

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## STEP 8: REFLECT AFTER THE CONVERSATION

**What went well:**

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**What I could try differently next time:**

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### HELPFUL COMMUNICATION PHRASES

Words that reduce defensiveness and keep conversations productive

Using calmer language helps prevent conflict from escalating.

Instead of... → Try saying...

- ***"You never listen."*** → "I don't feel heard, and I'd like to explain."
- ***"You're overreacting."*** → "I see this is important to you."
- ***"This is your fault."*** → "I'm trying to understand what happened."
- ***"Calm down."*** → "Let's take a moment to slow this down."
- ***"You always do this."*** → "This has happened a few times, and I'd like to talk about it."
- ***"I'm done talking."*** → "I need a break so I can respond better."



### LISTENING TOOLS THAT LOWER TENSION

What to say when the other person is upset

- ***"I want to make sure I understand you."***
- ***"What I hear you saying is..."***
- ***"That sounds frustrating."***
- ***"I didn't realize you felt that way."***

Feeling heard often reduces anger more than being "right."



### WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If communication is connected to fear, intimidation, or harm:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Call or Text
- 911 – For immediate danger

Support is confidential and help is available.



**Livingston County  
Health Center**  
YOUR LOCAL LINK TO PUBLIC HEALTH