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*Member Resource*

<b>Title:</b>	Changing “You” messages to “I” messages
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<b>Type of Activity or Resource:</b>	Mini lecture/activity/role play
<b>Objective:</b>	To enhance awareness behind “attack” messages
<b>Recommended Age Group:</b>	Middle School to Adult
<b>Materials Needed:</b>	Handout 24A
<b>Time:</b>	40 mins

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## Strategy 24

### Changing "You" Messages to "I" Messages

#### Objective(s):

To enhance the participants' awareness of the feelings behind "attack" messages.

To provide the participants the opportunity to practice communicating feelings by using "I" messages.

#### Age:

Middle School to adult

#### Procedure:

Mini-lecture/activity

#### Mini-lecture:

*When we are upset with someone, it is very typical to attack that person. Attack messages usually begin with the word "you." YOU don't like me! YOU never pay enough attention to me! Those statements are attack statements because, when I use them, I am saying something about the other person, rather than telling the other person how I feel or what I want. A "YOU" message is usually accusatory or critical. If I attack the other person with a "you" message, the other person will usually attack back or defend himself or herself. Either way, I don't give the person the opportunity to respond to my feeling or my need. If we continue to attack each other, the real issue is never dealt with.*

*If, on the other hand, I speak for myself and communicate what I want or what I'm feeling, I get to find out how the other person will respond when I'm honest about my feelings or my requests. I may not like the response, but at least I will have the chance to see how sensitive the other person will be to what I'm REALLY trying to get across. When people are not attacked and made to feel defensive, it is surprising how sensitive they can be.*

*The last point to consider before we do this activity is that when a person attacks me with a "you" message, I don't have to get hooked into the attack/defend syndrome. For instance, if someone says to me, "You don't care about me!" I can try to pinpoint what it is that person is feeling by asking, "What are you feeling right now?" This question will direct the conversation to the real issue.*

#### Activity:

1. Distribute Handout 24.A entitled, "Changing 'YOU' Messages to 'I' Messages" [page 72]. Ask the participants to follow the directions by writing responses on the handouts. Ask them to fill in the items privately. Discussion will occur later.
2. When everyone has completed a written response to each item, ask the group to share their responses for each item.
3. Ask for volunteers to role play interactions where people are communicating in "you" messages. Ask other group members to discuss how the interactions might have been more effective if "I" messages had been used. Ask for volunteers to role play interactions using "I" messages.

## Handout 24.A

## Changing "YOU" Messages to "I" Messages

Guess the feeling behind each of the following "You" messages. Change the "You" message into an "I" message.

1. You don't care about me!  
I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
2. You're trying to make me jealous!  
I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_.
3. You never show up on time!  
I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_.
4. You're using me!  
I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_.
5. You never tell me what's going on with you.  
I want you to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Why can't you be more like John? He calls Laura every night.  
I would like you to \_\_\_\_\_.
7. If you don't quit lying to me, I will stop seeing you.  
I don't feel \_\_\_\_\_.
8. You shouldn't make fun of my dancing.  
I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you laugh at my dancing.
9. How could you be so stupid to leave my records in the rain?  
I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because you left my records in the rain.
10. Write down the last "You" message that someone said to you. Underneath that message, write down what the person might have said if he or she had communicated the feeling(s) in an "I" message. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Write down the last "You" message that you said to someone. Underneath that message, write down what you might have said if you had communicated your feeling(s) in an "I" message. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Strategy 25

## I, You, We, They, But, And....

**Objective(s):**

To enable the participants to get to know one another better.

To provide the participants with the opportunity to practice communicating feelings.

**Age:**

Elementary to adult

**Procedure:**

1. Divide the participants into dyads and ask them to sit face-to-face.
2. Tell the participants that, at the word "go," they may say anything they wish to each other. It doesn't even have to make sense, but whatever they say must begin with the word "I." When one participant says something, the other must then take a turn so that one person doesn't dominate the entire discussion. Follow the same procedure using the words "You," "We," "They," "But," and "And."
3. After the dyad, complete the "I" exercise. Ask them to tell each other how they felt speaking under the restriction. The same procedure applies to "you," "we," and so forth.
4. Suggested questions for processing:
  - A. How did you feel about having to speak under the restrictions?
  - B. Which word did you feel most uncomfortable using to begin a sentence? Which word did you feel most comfortable using?
  - C. How did you feel when your partner began every sentence with "you?"
  - D. How did you feel when your partner began every sentence with "I?" With "They?" And so forth?