

# SPEAKER

**GOALS:** To choose a topic of concern that you would like to explore and to share your concerns in a way that minimizes defensiveness in the listener.

## GET STARTED :

- Make a clear statement about your desire to talk about ONE TOPIC. For example, "I need to talk to you about the monthly finances". Don't hint ("Maybe we could spend some time together") and don't drop bombs ("Well the bank is going to take the house this month").
- Check the listeners readiness to listen and agree upon a time. "When would be a good time for you to discuss this?"

## TRY THE FOLLOWING:

- Introduce the issue you'd like to discuss by talking about yourself, your experiences, your feelings.
- Use "I" statements rather than "YOU" statements. For example, "I am feeling sad that I didn't get to spend any time with you" instead of "You are always busy and never have time for me". If you need to share something negative about the listener, start and end with a positive affirmation about them.
- If the listener is causing you to feel unsafe, share what is happening (or could happen) that is making you feel unsafe. For example, "I am feeling unsafe because your tone of voice sounds disinterested and defensive."
- If you have a concern about how the talk might go, start with it that. For example, "I need to have you listen without the television on."

## EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

- Use feeling words to help explain your experience.
- Be honest. Pretending or minimizing is dishonest. Speak the truth in the most loving way you can.
- Be vulnerable. Try not to avoid pain or embarrassment that may be a part of sharing deep feelings.

## IF YOU ARE ANGRY

- Try and discover the feeling under the anger. Hurt and sad feelings are usually underneath the anger.
- Take a "time-out" if necessary. Don't use time-out as a way to escape and avoid. The following statement works well... "I'm getting so angry that I need to call a 'time-out' so I can cool down and we will continue this talk in (10 minutes, 1 hour etc.)."