

Lesson 2.1

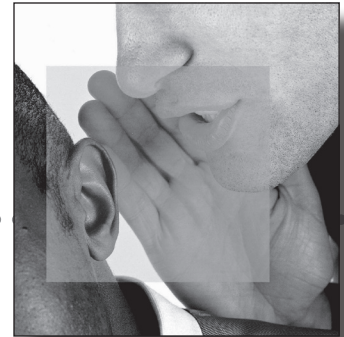
Effective Speaking Skills



parenting
inside
out®

Effective Speaking Skills

Coach Preparation



Lesson Overview

Parents will explore identifying and labeling their feelings. This will be accompanied by spending time tuning in to how each person feels particular feelings within their body. Parents will practice using “I statements” to acknowledge their feelings, and emotion regulation to manage their feelings. Parents will engage in an experiential activity to assist them in identifying the components of effective communication. Finally parents will practice making future-focused, non-blaming goal statements to communicate their desires or needs. The homework assignment will prepare parents to use their new effective communication skills in a conversation with their child’s caregiver.

What Should Happen

You will identify your feelings and share them with others in an “I statement” that includes a goal statement for what you’d like to have happen.

Take Away Messages

- 1) Learning effective communication skills is one of the most important jobs of parenting. Communication skills are tools in your parenting toolbox.
- 2) Effective communication skills may help improve relationships with the child and the child’s caregiver.
- 3) Effective communication involves identifying, labeling and taking responsibility for one’s feelings.
- 4) Effective communication involves the use of goal statements that are non-blaming, future-focused, and identify clearly and simply, what the speaker desires.
- 5) Effective communication involves cooperation, the expression of empathy, validation, and negotiation.

Agenda for Lesson 2.1

What Should Happen

You will identify your feelings and share them with others in an “I statement” that includes a goal statement for what you’d like to have happen.

Agenda



Agenda for Lesson 2.1

Post for class on an easel paper.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| A. | Take Attendance | (concurrent) |
| B. | Check In | (10 minutes) |
| C. | Identifying Feelings | (10 minutes) |
| D. | Emotion Regulation Practice | (5 minutes) |
| E. | Review What Should Happen and Agenda;
Set Goals | (10 minutes) |
| F. | Communication | (25 minutes) |
| G. | Break | (10 minutes) |
| H. | Using Effective Communication Techniques | (15 minutes) |
| I. | Role-Play Practice | (30 minutes) |
| J. | Homework Assignment | (5 minutes) |

Preparing Your Classroom

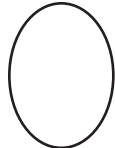
Easel Papers



1. Prepare the easel papers with the following titles and/or content:

Post easel papers in the classroom when you arrive.

- “Community Agreement”
- “What Should Happen and Agenda” (listed on previous page)
- “Feeling Words”
- “Effective and Ineffective Communication.”
Make two columns. Label one column “effective communication” and label the other column “ineffective communication.”
- Draw an oval divided in half, with the word “think” on top and the word “feel” on the bottom.
- Draw an oval that is empty on a new paper.
- “Wanting Your Child To Visit You.”



Handouts & Worksheets



2. Copy Handouts for distribution in class.

Distribute handouts only when it is time for an activity. Parents will turn handouts in when completed. If there is a plus sign ‘+’ marking the handout, it indicates you should make extra copies.

- + Handout 1.3.2 Learning Goals Journal Page
- Handout 2.1.1 Steps to Success in Effective Communication
Cut 2-4 copies apart so that two to four teams can work to put this in the right order on the Activity Page 2.1.2. Print enough copies for each parent to have a copy.
- Handout 2.1.2 Steps to Success in Effective Communication Activity Page
1 copy per team
- Handout 2.1.5 Homework Assignment “Conversation Plan”
- Handout 2.1.6 Scoring Guide for Conversation Plan

3. Review Worksheets.

Copy if not using a Parent Manual. Parents will not be required to turn worksheets in.

- ◆ Worksheet 2.1.3 Effective Speaking Skills
- ◆ Worksheet 2.1.4 Instructions for Role-Plays

Supplies



4. Set out the following supplies:

- Attendance sheet
- Pencils
- Masking tape
- Post-it® notes
- Markers
- Glue Sticks
- Learning Tree and roadway/signs

Special Materials

5. Set out the following special materials on the table:

- Plastic interlocking building blocks, such as Lego® blocks
Make 4 packets; 2 packets should be identical to each other, the other 2 should be identical to each other. All 4 packets do not need to be identical. Place packets in large zip-locking plastic sandwich bags.
- Large zipper-lock plastic sandwich bags
Label the first 2 identical packets as 1A and 1B.
Label the second 2 identical packets as 2A and 2B.

Lesson 2.1 - Effective Speaking Skills

Attendance **A. Take Attendance (concurrent)**

Check-In **B. Check In (10 minutes)**

Now it is time to check in. Let’s go around the room. Please tell us your name and how you are feeling today. Remember to use a feeling word. Who would like to go first?

Please turn in any learning goals journal pages you have completed.

Identify Feelings

C. Gain Attention: Identifying Feelings (10 minutes)

We are going to begin today with a quick activity and then we will move into Emotion Regulation. Let’s begin with brainstorming a list of feeling words. I’ll start with “frustrated.” Now you call out words that are feelings.

Write this and any other feeling word suggested on the easel paper labeled “Feeling Words.” If the group only lists “negative” feelings, remind them that “happy, proud, and excited” are also feelings.

Once the group slows down with suggestions, continue on.

Note: You will need to take this easel page with you and type up a handout of feeling words to copy and distribute during the next class. Give it the title of: **Handout 2.2.1 “Feeling Words.”**

Handout

Sometimes people don’t pay attention to what they’re feeling. They may have learned to turn off their feelings, stuff their feelings, or talk themselves out of their feelings. They may have learned to act on their feelings in inappropriate ways. These habits may have been learned from their families of origin, or from their culture, or from the larger society. In some situations it’s important to express

Identify Feelings (continued)



feelings, and in others, it's not. Some cultures encourage sharing feelings, while others don't. There are pros and cons to expressing feelings and you will need to figure out a way to manage your feelings, and to help your children manage their feelings, that works for your family. However, what's important to remember is that all of us have feelings, and that feelings are neither good nor bad, they just are. The way we choose to react to feelings can be appropriate or inappropriate, but all feelings are valid. Feelings give us important information about what's happening in our lives. Sometimes feelings are a result of something in the past; we feel a certain way about someone in the present simply because they remind us of a hurtful person or painful situation from our past. Even though that feeling is real, it is misplaced. Often, feelings like this occur without our conscious awareness. It is important to pay attention to feelings, work with the information they are giving us, and find appropriate ways to express what we are feeling.

What kinds of information do feelings give us?

That we are in danger, that we are upset and feeling discounted, that we are being taken advantage of, that a relationship or situation is unhealthy for us, that we need to take action to protect ourselves, or to right a wrong.

When we have feelings, the question becomes what to do next. Sometimes it's appropriate to express feelings, and sometimes it isn't.

At times when it is appropriate to express feelings, one way to do so that doesn't harm others is by using an "I statement." I statements allow us to be true to ourselves, to air our feelings, all without harming the person to whom we are speaking. Let's give it a try.

Distribute Post-it notes and ask parents to do the following:

Using the Post-it note, and one of the feelings listed on our "Feeling Words" easel paper, fill in the following sentence.

"I feel when....."



When the group is ready, have them come forward as a group and stand around the “Feeling Words” easel paper. Ask each parent to read his/her sticky note, then post it.

This is a powerful and sometimes emotion-laden activity. The coach should go first to create safety and equalize the process. Remind the class to observe the community agreement. Stop the group if there is side-talk. Ask parents to speak up if their voice cannot be heard. Remind parents before starting that they have the right to pass.

Once everyone has completed the activity ask parents to return to their seats and prepare for Emotion Regulation practice.

Take the “Feeling Words” easel paper home and type up a handout of “I Feel” statements to copy and distribute during the next class. Give it the title of: **Handout 2.2.2 “I Feel’ Statements.”**

Emotion Regulation



D. Emotion Regulation (ER) Practice (5 minutes)

Remember to model delivering emotion regulation practice without reading the script. Remind parents that beginning in lesson 4.1 they will take turns leading Emotion Regulation.

You have just completed an important and emotional activity. As you get comfortable in your chair and prepare for Emotion Regulation, I would like you to hold on to what you are feeling. Close your eyes, breathe in and focus on the feeling statement you wrote. How does remembering that statement, or the situation that provoked that statement, feel inside your body? Is your jaw clenched, is your heart beating rapidly, do you feel warm, do you feel you might cry, is your throat tight, are the muscles in your face and neck tight? Are your hands clenched, is your breathing rapid or shallow? Notice all of those feelings. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Now focus on each of those body feelings, continue breathing and concentrate on relaxing your body’s response, slowing your heart rate and relaxing your muscles.

Begin by breathing in through your nose and then let the air out through your mouth. As you let the air escape from your mouth, imagine your body relaxing with each exhale. Begin at your toes. It might help to clench your foot muscles and then relax them as you release the breath. Continue up to your calves, tighten as you breathe in, and relax the muscles as you exhale. Next move up to

Emotion Regulation (continued)

your thighs, tighten and inhale, relax as you exhale. Next tighten your stomach muscles, breathe in. Slowly release the breath through your mouth and relax your torso. Move up to your chest and shoulders. As you inhale lift your shoulders in a shrug. Release your breath and drop your shoulders. Clench your biceps and fists. Inhale deeply. Relax your arms and hands as you slowly exhale. Continue breathing deeply in as you tighten the muscles in your face. As you exhale the breath, relax your face, jaw, forehead, and scalp. You may even let your jaw drop open in a relaxed position. Repeat with three deep breaths and slow exhales and experience your relaxation increase each time. When you are ready, open your eyes.

Is anyone willing to share what you experienced as you felt the feeling in your body?

If you haven't had a lot of practice paying attention to what you're feeling and naming that feeling, you can learn to use the information in your body to warn you that you are feeling something. Once you acknowledge your distress, then you can work on labeling that feeling.

If you are just starting to learn how to notice and label your feelings you may need quite a bit of practice. We will practice that through our daily check-in.

Sometimes when you are just learning how to express your feelings, you might label lots of different emotions as "anger" or "feeling tired." The challenge is to "lift the lid" on those two feelings and find out what is underneath. That can sometimes be a scary process. For example, you think you feel angry when a significant relationship ends against your wishes. However, if you dig a little deeper, you find that underneath the anger you feel sad that you don't matter to the other person, or you may be frightened at the prospect of being alone. It is important to check beneath the surface to identify what you are really feeling.

Setting Goals

E. Review What Should Happen and Plan; Set Goals (10 minutes)

We began today by talking about feelings, because identifying and labeling your feelings is an important first step in improving your communication with other people. Identifying and labeling what you're feeling helps you communicate your wants and needs to others.

Setting Goals
(continued)

Once you know what you are feeling, you may need to take some time to regulate your emotions before talking to the person in order to avoid undesirable behavior. To see why, let's take a look at two simple drawings.

As human beings, we are thinking and feeling creatures. If we were to draw a picture of our internal world when we're not upset, it might look something like this:

Turn to the easel page with this drawing on it:



What happens to this picture when we're feeling a strong emotion?

For example, you call home at the pre-arranged time and the caregiver says your child is not home.

What might you feel?

Turn to the easel page with this drawing on it:



Where do I draw the line now?

Would someone come up and show me where the line belongs now between thinking and feeling?

Draw this on the easel page:



Setting Goals (continued)

What happens to our ability to think clearly when we are feeling strong emotions?

We have a reduced ability to think clearly because emotions take over.

When this happens inside of us, we aren't ready to communicate with someone else.

Is anyone willing to share about a time when they tried to talk to someone when they were feeling very strongly about something? Did that work out well? Did you accomplish your goal?

Often times, trying to talk about something with someone when our emotions are high creates problems. It is better to calm down first.

What could help us move from this state back to a state where we are able to think more clearly?

Emotion Regulation.

Let's take a look at how we are going to work on these skills today.

Review What Should Happen and Agenda for 2.1.

Now I'd like you to take out your sticky notes and write down one or more learning goals for yourself for today's lesson.

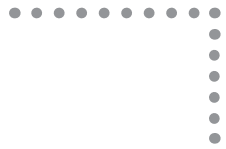
Does someone have an example of a personal learning goal for today?

One I can think of is "I'd like to learn how to speak to my son in a way that invites him to say more and not shut down." Add your name or initials to your goal. Now come up, read your goal aloud, and hang it up on the tree.

Coach parents to help them write specific learning goals pertaining to their unique family situations.

Activity:
Communication

F. Stimulate Recall of Prior Learning: Communication (20 minutes)



We have talked about the importance of tuning into your body and noticing what you are feeling. We have also practiced acknowledging what we are feeling by labeling the feeling and owning it with an “I Feel” statement. Then we used emotion regulation to calm ourselves and prepare to effectively communicate to others what we are feeling. Next we’re going to do an activity that will allow you to experience some of the other necessary communication skills.

Divide the class into four teams. Two teams will be the A teams. Give one team bag 1A. Give the other team bag 2A. The A teams will have eight minutes to build something with the building blocks.

Tell these teams that they will need to keep track of their process, perhaps even write down the steps they went through because they will be trying to get team B to replicate their design by just telling them what to do. Tell them they have eight minutes to build something. Tell them they will not be given any extra time. Wherever they are, at eight minutes, they will need to stop.

Give the other two teams bag 1B and 2B. These are the B teams. 1B should be paired with 1A. 2B should be paired with 2A. They should not be able to see or hear what the A teams are doing. Ask the B teams to wait for further instruction. The B teams should take out homework and work on it while they are waiting.

After eight minutes, the two A teams who built the object will describe to the B teams how to build the object. The two teams should sit with their backs to each other. Team A should not let Team B see the object. Team A should not be able to see what Team B is building. Team A may not touch any of the construction materials of team B. Team A must simply talk them through the process for putting it together, much like they would if they were talking over the phone. B teams may ask questions and A teams may answer them, but there should be no visual contact between A’s and B’s. Tell them they have 10 minutes.

At the end of 10 minutes, ask the two pairs of teams to compare their constructions. Look for similarities and differences, and then debrief the activity.

Activity: Debrief Activity (5 minutes)

**Communication
(continued)**



As you conduct the following debrief, record what parents say in the appropriate columns as they mention the elements of effective and ineffective communication.

Tell me what you experienced. How difficult was this for the speakers? How difficult was this for the listeners and doers?

Listen to responses.

How well did you do?

Listen to responses. Whether teams were effective or ineffective in reproducing the structure described to them, learning can take place. Continue recording behaviors or conditions as parents mention them under the two columns labeled "Effective vs. Ineffective Communication."

How was this experience like talking to your child's caregiver on the phone?

Listen to responses.

Why do you need to be able to communicate effectively with your child's caregiver?

To co-parent well, to be united for the sake of your child, to give and get accurate information about your child.

Clear, effective communication is critical among all of the adults who are responsible for caring for children and for making decisions about children's lives. Being a good communicator is one of the most important things effective parents do, especially when it comes to difficult decisions, such as those that you may be involved in during and after prison. Good communication is a tool in your parenting toolbox.

Today we're going to think closely about communication by thinking about the speaker and the listener in a conversation. Of course, both people are doing both things throughout a conversation, but a

Activity:
Communication
(continued)



“speaker” to us is the person who is bringing up an issue, and the “listener” is the person the speaker is talking to.

Using everything we have experienced and talked about today, let’s finish our two lists. Have we missed anything? Is there anything else I should add to either of these columns?

Record parent responses on the easel paper.

Ingredients of effective communication:

- Examples:
- The speaker owns feelings with an “I” statement,
 - Asks if the other has time to talk to him,
 - Acknowledges and validates listener,
 - Makes a clear goal statement that focuses on what he wants in the future,
 - Is willing to negotiate with the listener,
 - Chooses words carefully to create the effect he is seeking,
 - Uses few, but more exact words,
 - Avoids vague or confusing words.

Ingredients of ineffective communication:

- Examples:
- The speaker blames and/or criticizes,
 - Brings up the past,
 - Uses words like “never,” “always,” “should,”
 - Never asks for what he/she wants or needs,
 - Doesn’t ask the listener if now is a good time to talk,
 - Views listener as the enemy,
 - Is inflexible,
 - Says too many words,
 - Is not exact in his/her wording.

You have identified many of the ingredients of effective and ineffective communication. Let’s take a 10-minute break and when we return we will go over a handout with some tips for effective communication.

Break

G. Break (10 minutes)

Effective Communication Technique

Handout

Worksheet

H. Present New Content: Using Effective Communication Techniques (15 minutes)

Ask parents to form two to four teams, depending upon the size of your class. Distribute one set of cut up pieces of **Handout 2.1.1 “Steps to Success in Effective Communication”** and one **Handout 2.1.2 “Steps to Success in Effective Communication Activity Page”** to each team. Ask the teams if they can put the pieces together to create a successful conversation. Remind parents to work from lower left to upper right in the order they think an effective, successful conversation might occur from the speaker’s perspective. Distribute glue sticks to each team. Provide 5 -7 minutes for teams to build the model. Debrief the exercise, then distribute a copy of Handout 2.1.1 to every parent along with a copy of **Worksheet 2.1.3 “Effective Speaking Skills.”** Review, inviting parents to add their own ideas to the handout.

As you look at these tips, think about whether or not you are experiencing frustrating situations and if what you are currently doing is working well for you. If it isn’t, you may want to try out some of these techniques and see if your results improve.

Role-play Practice

I. Provide Guided Practice and Feedback: Role-Play Practice (20 minutes)

In a moment, we are going to role-play using effective communication. Some of you may feel anxious about role-play or feel that it isn’t helpful. Role-play is simply a way of practicing a skill. Practice through role-play can make you feel self-conscious or embarrassed, but it does work well to prepare you for tough situations. Just like any other skill, effective communication takes practice, and role-plays are simply a way of practicing.

Let’s get some practice in a role-play where you are calling from prison to ask the caregiver to bring your children for a visit. First you will practice an unhelpful way. Unhelpful way practice has been shown in the research to help you unlearn unhelpful habits. Then we will practice the helpful way. Practicing the helpful way gives you new skills to replace the old, unhelpful habits.

Role-play Practice
(continued)



Worksheet

First let's form pairs. Find two chairs and place them back-to-back.

Wait for this to occur.

Decide who will be the speaker first. The speaker is the person calling from prison. The caregiver is the listener.

Wait for this to occur.

Distribute or turn to **Worksheet 2.1.4 "Instructions for Role-plays."** Review. Answer questions.

Once the parents have begun, travel around to each pair and provide coaching.

Call time after 10 minutes. Remind teammates to switch roles.

Time for a second 10 minutes.

Call the group back together and debrief:

Demos and Debrief (10 minutes)

Would two teams volunteer to present their role-plays?

Let's give them a round of applause. Let's also give them some feedback. What specifically did they do well and what might they do differently next time?

As your team was practicing, how did the unhelpful role-play make you feel? Speakers? Listeners?

Speakers, did you accomplish your goal?

How did the helpful role-play make you feel? Speakers? Listeners?

Speakers, did you accomplish your goal?

Were there any trouble spots? Anyone have any questions?

Effective communication really does require the cooperation of two people. Even if you practice effective communication skills, the listener still needs to cooperate with the process for it to be successful. Using effective communication skills isn't a guarantee that all will go well. This is especially true if you have a history of

Role-play Practice (continued)

failed communication with someone like a partner, a parent, or a caregiver. It may take time before the other person is even willing to consider that you have changed to a healthier, more productive way of communicating. But it's important for you to keep trying and avoid going back to old patterns. It may be that the only result of your communicating better is that the two of you can have a reasonable conversation. The other person may never trust you and may never be willing to open themselves up to you in the same way as before. This will be hard, but it may make a real difference for your child. It may mean that you actually get to play a role in the life of your child, when before, this was not possible. Again, however, there are no guarantees. Effective communication only creates the possibility that you can reconnect or get along better with the other people involved in the life of your child.

Homework Assignment

J. Preparation for TOL to ROL: Homework (5 minutes)

Handouts

Distribute and review **Handout 2.1.5 "Conversation Plan" Homework Assignment** and **Handout 2.1.6 "Scoring Guide for Conversation Plan."** Remind parents that the last part of 2.1.5 on the conversation plan asks them to write out the exact script they plan to say. They should not write: "Ask if it is a good time to call," instead, write: "Is this a good time to call".

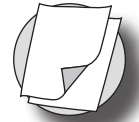
Come up to the tree and remove any learning goals that you accomplished today.

Pick up one Journal Page for each learning goal that you accomplished. Write about how you met that goal by responding to the items on the handout.

After Class After Class (10 minutes)

Lesson 2.1

Handouts

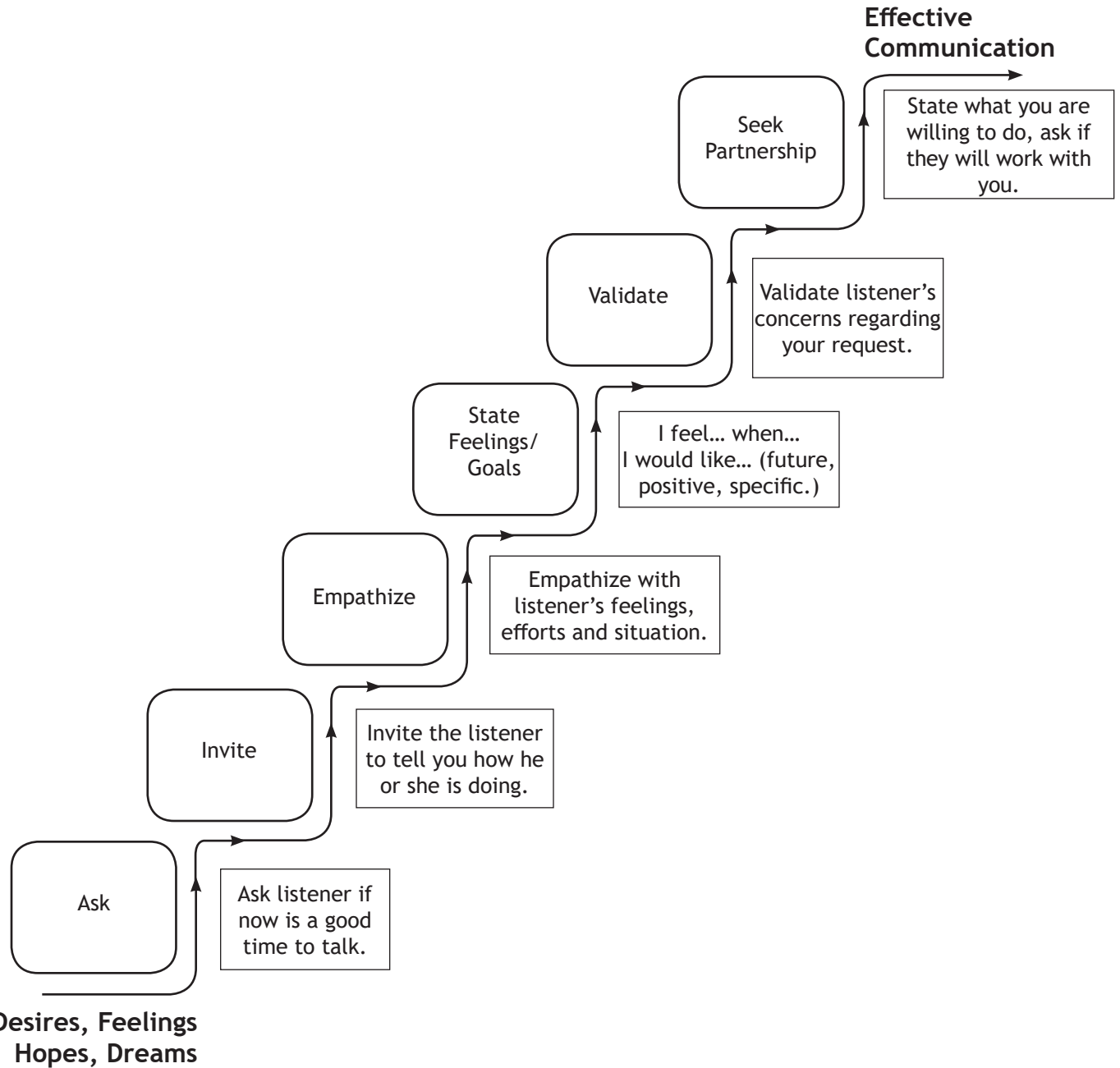


Effective Speaking Skills

parenting
inside
out®

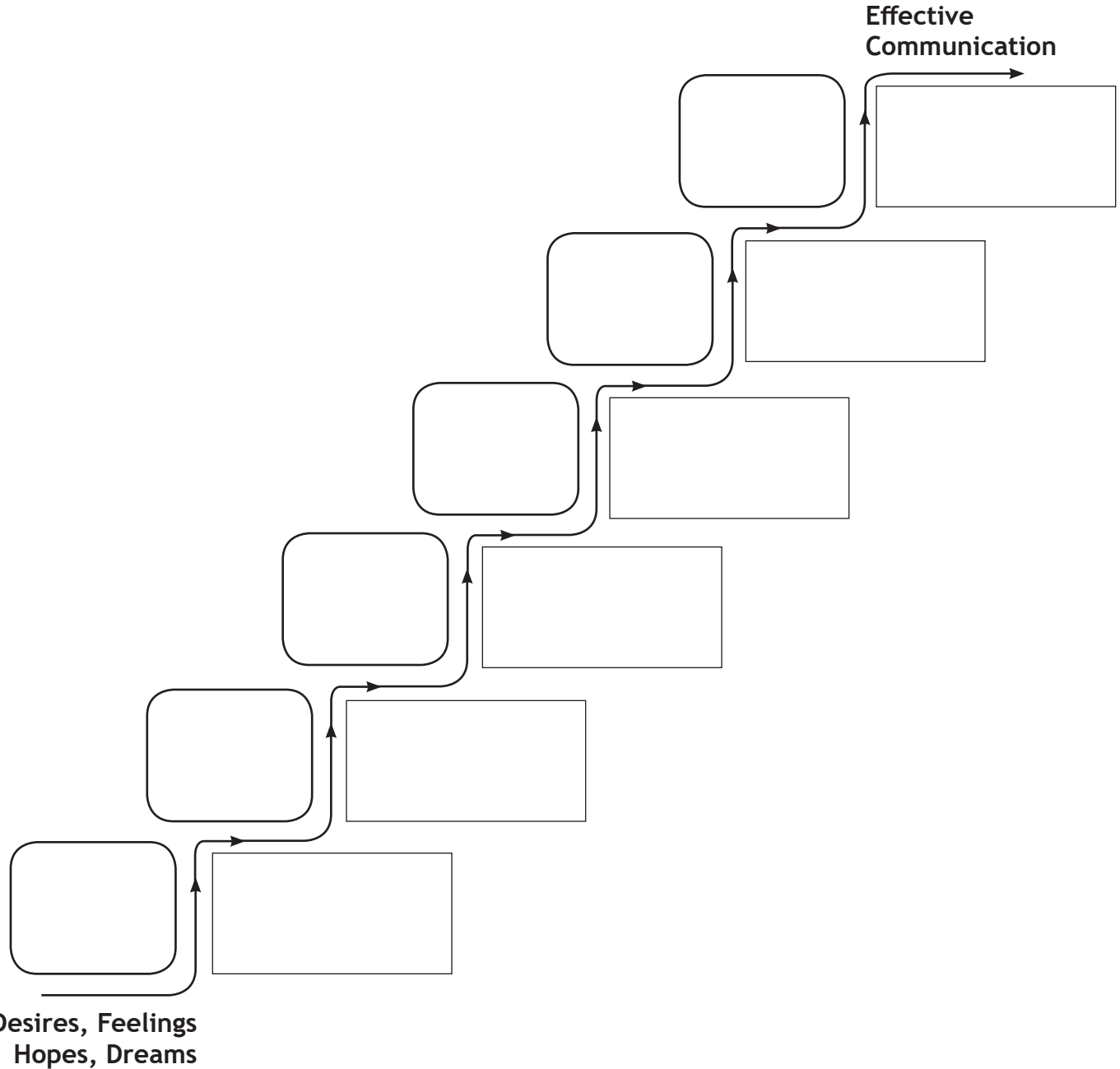
Name: _____

Steps to Success in Effective Communication



Name: _____

Steps to Success in Effective Communication Activity Page



Name: _____

Page 1 of 3

Homework Assignment

Conversation Plan

Use the scoring guide on handout 2.1.5 as a checklist for putting together your conversation plan. When you write out what you are going to say in question 7 below, use the exact words you plan to say and use the scoring guide (handout 2.1.6) as a checklist to make sure you have all the important parts of an effective conversation.

1. Describe a difficult situation you have been experiencing with your child’s caregiver or your DHS worker. Choose one of these or write one of your own. Some examples:
 - You want to ask for a new DHS caseworker.
 - You want to ask for more visitation with your children.
 - You are concerned that the caregiver isn’t meeting your child’s needs.
 - You want to talk to the other parent about custody.

2. Describe how this situation makes you feel. Describe how the situation feels throughout your body.

3. Write an “I feel ____ when ____” statement that tells what you feel and why without blaming the listener.

Name: _____

Scoring Guide for Conversation Plan

Designer's Name _____ Reviewer _____

Steps to Success	Absent	Developing	Adequate	Well Developed
Asks if call time is convenient.				
Invites listener to tell how he/she is doing.				
Empathizes with listener.				
States feelings with an "I statement."				
States goals that are specific, future-focused, and tells what speaker wants.				
Validates listener's concerns.				
Seeks partnership-tells what speaker is willing to do.				
Avoids "never," "always," "should."				
Thanks listener for listening.				

Comment here on what is...

1) good about this plan: _____

2) not clear about this plan: _____

Lesson 2.1

Worksheets



Effective Speaking Skills



Effective Speaking Skills

1. **Ask the listener if now is a good time to have a conversation.**
2. **Invite the listener to tell you how he/she is doing.**
3. **Empathize. Recognize and make understanding comments about the listener's efforts, worries, and situation.**
 - “I recognize how hard it has been for you while I've been in prison.”
 - “I realize that you are working very hard to take good care of our child.”
 - “I appreciate what challenges you face while I'm in prison.”
 - “Thank you for having our child's best interest in mind.”
4. **State your feelings. Take responsibility for your feelings with an “I statement.”**
 - “I feel sad when I think about how much I am missing while being in prison.”
 - “I feel frustrated when we can't seem to negotiate a plan for having my child visit.”
 - “I feel discounted when I call to speak to my child at the arranged time and I get no answer.”
 - “I feel forgotten when my letters are returned unopened.”
5. **State your goals. Follow your “I feel” statement with a “goal statement” that is future-focused and tells the listener what you would like.**
 - “I miss my daughter and would like to talk to you about a plan for having her visit.”
 - “I would like to be more involved in my child's life and would appreciate talking to you about my ideas for how I can do that.”

Effective Speaking Skills

6. Validate the listener's concerns regarding your request.

"I understand that I'm asking a lot of you and you don't know how to fit it in."

"I understand that it is hard for you to trust me after all that I have done."

"I understand that you are worried that visiting in prison will be scary for the children."

7. Tell the listener what you would be willing to do to make the goal happen.

"I'd be willing to make a plan that works for you."

"I'd be willing to help out with some gas money."

"I'd be willing to write a letter to our child's teacher."

"I'd be willing to call at a time that is more convenient for you."

"I'd be willing to listen to your concerns without interrupting."

8. Ask if they'd be willing to work on this issue with you.

9. Thank the listener for talking with you.



Instructions for Role-Plays

1. Form role-play pairs.
2. Within your pair, select the first speaker and the first listener.
3. Put your chairs back to back with each other. The speaker initiates a “wrong way” role-play. During this role-play, the speaker uses ineffective speaking. The listener should respond as he or she feels is appropriate given what the speaker says. After about 2 to 3 minutes, the speaker stops the role-play.
4. Turn your chairs around and talk about what each of you felt like during the role-play, and whether the speaker’s goal was accomplished.
5. Turn your chairs away from each other again. The speaker initiates a “right way” role-play. During this role-play, the speaker uses the steps to success in effective communication model. The speaker may look at Handout 2.1.1 and Worksheet 2.1.3 for ideas. After about 2 to 3 minutes, the speaker stops the role-play.
6. Turn around and talk about what each of you felt like during the role-play and whether the speaker’s goal was accomplished.
7. Reverse roles. The new speaker repeats steps 3 through 6.

