

PRACTICING HEALTHY COMMUNICATION



Part 1 Directions: Read the scenarios below. Take turns acting out how the two characters in each of the scenarios can use healthy communication skills to resolve the issues between them. Refer to the “Five Tips” box on the right.

SCENARIO A: Words Can Hurt

After Friend 1 and Friend 2 have a fight, they act without thinking through the consequences.

Friend 1 is thinking: After we had a fight, my friend made up a bunch of stories about me and told some friends. To get even, I sent a text to all our friends saying bad things about him/her.

Friend 2 is thinking: My friend really disrespected me when we had a fight, and I needed to vent. I didn’t mean for him/her to hear about it.

SCENARIO B: Risky Party

Friend 3 is invited to a party but Friend 4 thinks it’s a bad idea to go.

Friend 3 is thinking: Dan invited me to a party at his house this weekend. I told my friend I couldn’t wait to go, but he/she told me not to bother. I think he/she is jealous that I was personally invited.

Friend 4 is thinking: I saw pictures of Dan’s last party online. There was alcohol—some people were passed out, others were doing things they were later embarrassed about, and I heard someone wrecked their parents’ car. I think it would be smart to stay away.

Five Tips for Healthy Communication

1. Stay in control of your feelings.
2. Make eye contact.
3. Pay attention to your gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice (as well as other people’s).
4. Listen actively: Take turns talking, ask questions, and don’t jump to conclusions.
5. Use “I” statements to express your feelings.

Part 2 Directions: Read the scenario below. On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions.

SCENARIO C: Health Concerns/Drug Use

Jenny and her older cousin Tina have been very close since Jenny can remember. Recently, Tina started hanging out with a new crowd that makes Jenny nervous. Today, Tina was acting differently and admitted to Jenny that she had tried drugs. Jenny told Tina that she should stop immediately or she’ll have to tell her parents. Tina thinks Jenny is creating drama and that if Jenny loves and respects her she won’t tell her what to do, or tell anyone about her business. Jenny feels it’s because she cares that she is telling Tina to stop.

1. How can Jenny use healthy communication strategies and respectful language to express her concerns to Tina?
2. How might Tina’s drug use impact how she perceives this situation? (See sidebar on the right.)
3. Is Tina right, that if Jenny loves and respects her she won’t tell her what to do? Why or why not?
4. What should Jenny do if Tina refuses to stop using drugs?

Additional Tip: Drug Use and Communication

It can be hard to have a conversation with someone who is using drugs or is in withdrawal from drug use. This is because drugs can impair a person’s judgment, perception of a situation, and ability to read social cues. Drug use can also impact a person’s mood and ability to control his or her emotions and behaviors.