

Healthy Communication Using V.O.I.C.E.

Downey Park Counseling Associates

(V)ocabulary and Expression

- Developing a healthy emotional vocabulary so we can express our feelings in *assertive* (not passive, passive-aggressive, or aggressive) ways.
- Confessing to ourselves first, then others, what is going on with us.

(O)thers/Other Perspective

- Accept that we do not own the truth—it has many facets and angles. We must learn to draw others out and listen as well as find more information than ourselves alone through other sources.
- Also realize that others are prone to mistakes just like us
- Remember to *fight for understanding* rather than *fight to be understood*.

(I)nternal Control

- Recognize when we are thinking emotionally, and avoid the *fight* (anger), *flight* (avoidance), or *freeze* (guilt and shame) habits.
- Accepting that we must exercise adult responsibility over our emotions using healthy boundaries.
- Rather than attempt to control others and our environment we must focus on controlling ourselves.

(C)hallenging of Beliefs

- Most often, what we believe about a situation (or ourselves) can get us into internal or relational trouble. Become aware of the main core beliefs we are entertaining and challenge whether or not they are true or even helping us.

(E)stablishing Healthy Boundaries

- Recognize that others are not responsible for our feelings and cannot deliver us from them.
- Be aware of where we *stop* and *others start*. Just as others are not in control of our feelings (although they do frustrating and hurtful things) we are not in control other's feelings.

