

## **"I" Messages**

Relate a feeling about a behavior in terms of "I."

Describe effect behavior had on the person.

Avoid use of "you."

"You" messages are judgmental and provoke defensiveness.

**Example:** "You" message: "You are being uncooperative about doing your treatments."

**Example:** "I" message: "I am concerned about how the treatments are going because I want to see you get better."

## **Third-Person Technique**

Express a feeling in terms of a third person ("he," "she," "they"). This is less threatening than directly asking children how they feel because it gives them an opportunity to agree or disagree without being defensive.

**Example:** "Sometimes when a person is sick a lot, he feels angry and sad because he cannot do what others can." Either wait silently for a response or encourage a reply with a statement, such as "Did you ever feel that way?"

This approach allows children three choices: (1) to agree and, one hopes, express how they feel; (2) to disagree; or (3) to remain silent, which means they probably have such feelings but are unable to express them at this time.

## **Facilitative Response**