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MANIPULATIVE COMMUNICATION and "I" MESSAGES Handout 6.5

Ineffective Manipulative Strategies

1) PLACATING: Pacifying, soothing over differences, being nice, protective, defending others gently, covering up. "Oh, it's not so bad, really" "We agree basically." These behavior aim to avoid unpleasant feelings.

2) AVOIDING: Being quiet, pretending not to understand, changing the subject, playing weak, playing helpless. complaining about one's own weakness. "I can't help it," "I didn't hear you." "I feel so bad you can't imagine." These are all passive behaviors. The individual does not take responsibility for stating what he/she wants or needs.

3) BLAMING: Judging, bullying, comparing, complaining. "It's always your fault." "You never ---" "why don't you--''

4) PREACHING: Lecturing, moralizing, using outside authority, "You should --- "YOU must --" proving that you 're right by explaining, calculating, using logic, etc. "Dr. Spock says ---" "What you're actually doing is ---"

5) RIDICULE: Name calling. "You Dummy"

6) CRITICISM "You always make mistakes." "You should know better."

7) GIVING SOLUTION: "Don't feel sad." "I'll do it for you." " Just do it like this.

8) QUESTIONING: (expressing suspicion or doubt) "How long have you been in this job?" "Did you follow all the directions exactly?" "Didn't you read the chart?" "*Why* did you…?"

Each of these forms of communication is an attempt to get someone else to do things or see things "my way." They usually produce some measure of defensiveness in the other person. At times these behaviors function as a way to avoid unpleasant feelings. For example anger which often accompanies these behaviors may mask fear, hurt or vulnerability. Instead of using any of the above forms of communication strive to use an **"I" message** as illustrated below:

1. Describe the behavior of the other person. *When you…*
2. State feelings that were and are experienced. *I felt …*
3. State the impact the other's behavior had on you. *Because ..*
4. Listen and affirm the other person *I understand that you think/feel..*
5. State your wants and goals. Make a behavior request *I want you to …*

Example:

(1) When you shouted at me (2) I felt angry and hurt (3)because I'm doing the best that I can. (4) You are frustrated and (5) I would like to work this out with you calmly.