Talking about friendship dramas can be tough. But when conflicts arise—from gossip, cliques, or other friendship issues—it’s always best to talk about them.

The problem is that when people are upset, they tend to speak in “you-statements” (“You’re a liar!” or “You are so stupid”). “You-statements” immediately put the other person on the defensive. She’ll feel attacked and will likely toss some “you-statements” right back at you. Then the conflict might escalate and you’ll miss the opportunity to help each other understand what’s wrong and how you might fix it.

So instead of a “you-statement,” offer an “I-statement.” Focus on one specific behavior or action of the other person and how it affected you.

An “I-statement” (“I feel hurt” or “I feel sad”) lets you communicate your feelings in a strong way because you’re making it about you, not the other person, and your feelings are communicated openly and honestly. It allows the other person to really hear you—without feeling threatened. Check out this formula for expressing yourself with “I-statements”:

I feel .................................................................
(say your feeling)

when you .........................................................
(describe one specific action)

because ..........................................................
(say why the action connects to your feeling)