

## **PARENT INFORMATION 5**

### **The Triple A's: Assert**

#### **Straight Talk 4 Friendship Flare Ups**

Straight Talk is a HIGHWAY TOOL that gives your child a strategy to skilfully and successfully step up to Friendship Flare Ups.

Learning to use Assert with Straight Talk takes courage and practise. How often have you found yourself in a situation where speaking up for yourself felt confrontational and a little uncomfortable, but helped you to walk away from that situation feeling heard, respected and valued?

Learning to Assert can often be confused with being angry, demanding, blaming or overly dramatic in order to make a point. Assertiveness is about the body language, tone of voice and words of calmness and confidence.

Using Straight Talk is useful in situations where there has been 'triangulation' in friendship. This means the 'Chinese Whispers' that often feature in friendships where someone says something to someone about someone else, who passes the message on and on - until eventually it reaches the ears of the intended person. By that time, the message has been distorted and complicated, and very often doesn't communicate the intent of the original message. Rumours and gossip are very damaging to child and adult friendships and can be a leading cause of Friendship Flare Ups.

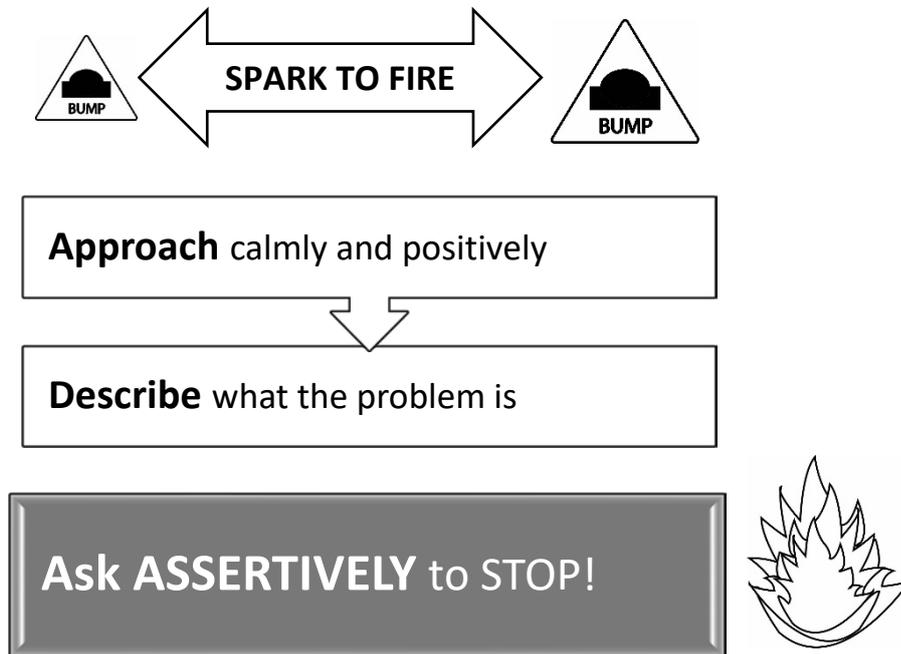
Straight Talk is a difficult skill to establish, and requires a child understanding the difference that their body language, choice of words and tone can make. Today your child has role played the same sentence but using different voices – 'Angry', 'Whiney' and 'Drama Llama' – with the accompanying body language - and then compared that to using Straight Talk.

Try this yourself with a popular sentence used by parents all over the world: "Tidy your bedroom" and see the effect that your body language and tone of voice has on the communication.

Straight Talk is a little practised and seldom modelled essential resilience skill. Perhaps there will be opportunities in your home to model Straight Talk in the coming week, clearly indicating to your child that you are using this HIGHWAY TOOL, and how you are choosing your words, your tone and your body language.

Very simply, Straight Talk involves approaching someone directly and calmly, confidently describing the behaviour in which they are engaging, and assertively stating it needs to stop.

This is what Straight Talk looks like. Also including some role plays at home would help your child to master the skill.



Finally, on Life's busy Highway, the primary school years can be challenging socially and emotionally. This part of the journey can be made much easier by utilising HIGHWAY TOOLS to get over the inevitable BUMPS and occasional HAZARDS.

The more TOOLS that your child has in their HIGHWAY TOOLBOX, the greater their chances of being happy and successful...

## HIGHWAY HEROES

### *Teaching skills for resilience*

**REFLECTION POINT:**

*'Chinese Whispers' type rumours and gossip also happens to adults - in social groups and at work. How confident are you in approaching such a situation directly and asking for it to stop? Perhaps this week will be your opportunity to find out.*