

Facilitator Guide: Planning Positive Conversations (aka PIVA)

Introduction: Why PIVA Matters

You Say:

"Communication can be tough, especially when emotions are running high. The PIVA tool helps us plan what we want to say and how to say it in a way that supports healthy connection, even during difficult conversations."

"PIVA stands for **Positive, I-Statements, Validate, and Ask**. It's a practical way to prepare for important conversations, especially when we want to speak clearly and respectfully, without escalating tension."

Key points to highlight:

- The PIVA tool helps reduce conflict and support recovery-oriented communication.
- It's especially helpful for **talking with loved ones, setting boundaries, or asking for support**.
- Practicing PIVA can build confidence and improve relationships.

Step 1: Introduce the Four Parts of PIVA

You Say: "Let's go over each part of PIVA. You can use all four parts together, or just the pieces that feel helpful."

1. **Positive** – Begin with something positive to set the tone.
 - Example: "I care about you and I want us to be able to talk more openly."
2. **I-Statements** – Speak from your own experience using "I" instead of "you."
 - Example: "I feel overwhelmed when I get a lot of texts late at night."
3. **Validate** – Acknowledge the other person's feelings or perspective.
 - Example: "I know you're reaching out because you care."
4. **Ask** – Clearly ask for what you need.
 - Example: "Would you be willing to text me during the day instead?"

Facilitator's Role:

- Provide examples and model tone (calm, respectful, clear).
- Emphasize that PIVA is about **effective, not perfect** communication.

Step 2: Group Brainstorm or Practice

You Say: "Let's try building a PIVA message together. Think of a situation where you'd like to communicate more clearly or use this example: 'A friend keeps asking you to hang out at places that feel risky for your recovery.'"

- Start with the **Positive**.
- Add an **I-Statement**.
- Include a **Validation** of their intention.
- Finish with a respectful **Ask**.

Optional group brainstorm:

- Break into pairs or small groups to create sample PIVA messages.
- Share a few aloud if participants feel comfortable.

Facilitator Quick Tips:

- Encourage practicing out loud, it builds confidence.
- Remind participants they can write out a PIVA message before a conversation.
- Reinforce that even trying one part—like using an I-Statement—is a success.

Step 3: Encouraging Real-Life Use

You Say: "This week, if a tough conversation comes up, try using one or two parts of PIVA. Maybe just shift one sentence from 'You always' to 'I feel.' Even small changes can make a big difference."

Optional Reflection Questions:

- Which part of PIVA feels easiest for you? Which part feels hardest?
- How might using PIVA change the way you approach difficult conversations?
- Who might you want to try this with?

Summary

The **PIVA tool** helps participants prepare for healthy communication. By focusing on clarity, respect, and mutual understanding, it supports better relationships and greater confidence in expressing needs.