Practising Positive Communication Skills

1. **Here are two sample conflict situations. Compare the positive and negative responses.**

    A. When your former partner has the children, they eat all sorts of sweet treats and stay up too late.

    Negative response:
    Tell the kids what a lousy parent he is.

    Positive responses:
    Deal directly with him about his behaviour. In a calm voice, tell him that the children need to eat balanced meals and go to bed at their regular times. Discuss possible solutions to the problem with him, such as planning meals and shopping ahead.

    B. You discover your former partner has been asking your 12-year-old son for information about your new girlfriend.

    Negative response:
    Tell your son to get some "dirt" on his mother's social life.

    Positive response:
    Tell your son that next time he can ask his mother not to put him in this situation.
    Listen to how your son may be feeling. Speak with your former partner directly about the problem.

    Practice positive communication skills. In difficult situations, you can use these skills to handle conflict responsibly.

2. Try providing positive responses to this conflict situation:

Mary, Joe and daughter Lee

Mary and Joe separated eighteen months ago. They have a daughter, Lee. Yesterday, Joe brought Lee back four hours late from a weekend access visit.

Joe claims they were late because he had to deliver dried fish to his grandmother. But Lee has told Mary that they were late because Joe's new girlfriend came over and made dinner.

Now Mary is on the phone at the kitchen table. Mary is crying and yelling over the phone at Joe, calling him a liar.

Lee is sitting at the table listening to her mother.

If you were Mary, how would you respond to Joe's behaviour and Lee's feelings?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Think of some examples of conflict situations between you and your former partner.
List some positive responses to the problems:

Conflict Situations	*Positive Responses*
•	•
•	•
•	•