

Assertiveness

Assertiveness is...

- a personal technique developed with practice
- a risk
- tactfully being your real self
- an open and honest statement
- describing specific behaviors
- not backing down
- not name calling
- security through honesty
- standing up for yourself in a creative way
- being able to label your feelings
- showing sensitivity toward others
- breaking down your own and other defenses
- acknowledging your weaknesses but relying on your strengths
- an action process
- dealing with conflict
- a two-way communication process
- control
- not aggressive or threatening
- following through on a decision to deal with a person or situation
- both verbal and non-verbal

Non-Assertive Behavior

Failing to stand up for one's rights either by failing to express feelings or preferences or by allowing another person to infringe upon one's rights

Assertive Behavior

Standing up for one's rights by expressing one's thoughts and feelings in a direct, honest and appropriate fashion without denying the rights of others.

Aggressive Behavior

Standing up for one's rights in such a way that violates the rights of others or demeans the other person.

LEVELS OF ASSERTION

SIMPLE

simple, uncomplex statement of what you want
ex. "I'd rather go out to eat than cook tonight."

EMPATHIC

includes a statement about another's situation
ex. "I know you're busy, and I need to talk with you."

CONFRONTIVE

points out discrepancies in another's behavior
ex. "We agreed to study, and you went to play basketball."

SOFT

expresses positive sentiment without embarrassment
ex. "I really appreciate what you're doing."

ANGER

constructive expression of anger against another's actions
ex. "I get angry when you borrow my clothes without asking because then I can't wear them when I want to. I would rather you ask before you borrow them."

MODEL:

I...(describe feelings, reactions) when you...(describe behavior) because then...(describe effect). I would rather you...(give alternate behavior).

Assertiveness is a skill that is developed with practice.

Demonstrate assertive body language which includes:

Direct eye contact, erect body posture, clear and audible speech, use of gestures and facial expressions for emphasis.

Use descriptive, not labeling, words to point out the behavior of others.

Say, "You have been borrowing my clothes without my permission," rather than "You clothes stealer!"

Express your feelings as experiences caused by the behavior.

"I feel angry when you wear my clothes without asking me because I can't wear them when I want to."

Give an alternative behavior.

"I would like for you to ask me before you borrow my clothes."

Each situation is unique. Ask yourself:

What would I like to happen? How possible is this goal?

What rights does the other person have in this situation?

What obstacles are there to the person making the behavior change?

Am I comfortable with my rights to deal with this situation assertively?

A BILL OF ASSERTIVE RIGHTS

1. You have the responsibility to judge your own behavior, thoughts and emotions and to take responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself.
2. You have the right to offer no reasons or excuses for justifying your behavior.
3. You have the right to judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other peoples' problems.
4. You have the right to change your mind.
5. You have the right to make mistakes – and be responsible for them.
6. You have the right to say, "I don't know."
7. You have the right to be independent of the goodwill of others before coping with them.
8. You have the right to be illogical in making decisions.
9. You have the right to say, "I don't understand."
10. You have the right to say, "I don't care."