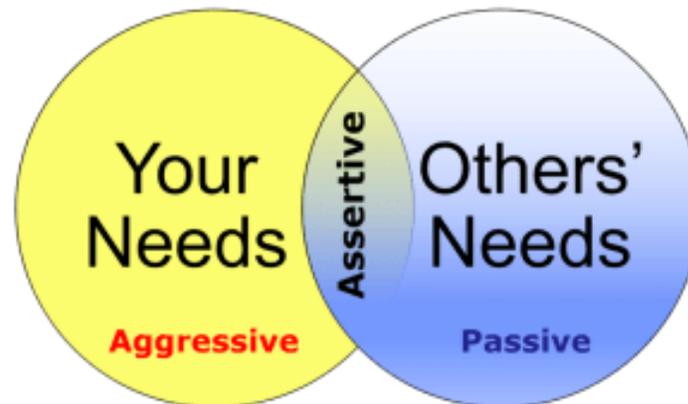


Assertiveness

How to stand up for your own needs and wants



What does assertiveness mean?

- Assertiveness is a style of communication in which a person stands up for their own needs and their own wants, while also taking into consideration the needs and wants of others without behaving passively or aggressively.

Traits of Assertive communicators

- Clearly state needs and wants
- Appropriate speaking volume – i.e. not mumbling, whispering or raising their voice
- Eye contact
- Steady tone of voice
- Listen to others without interruption
- Confident body language

Passive communication

- During passive communication, a person prioritised the needs, wants and feelings of others, even at their own expense. The person does not express their needs, or does not stand up for them.
- This can lead to being taken advantage of, even by well-meaning people who are unaware of the passive person's needs or wants.



Traits of Passive communication

- Soft spoken/quiet
- Poor eye contact – looks down/away
- Allows others to take advantage
- Does not express own needs and wants
- Prioritises needs of others
- Lack of confidence

Aggressive Communication

- Through aggressive communication, a person expresses that only their needs, wants and feelings matter. The other person is bullied, and their needs are ignored.



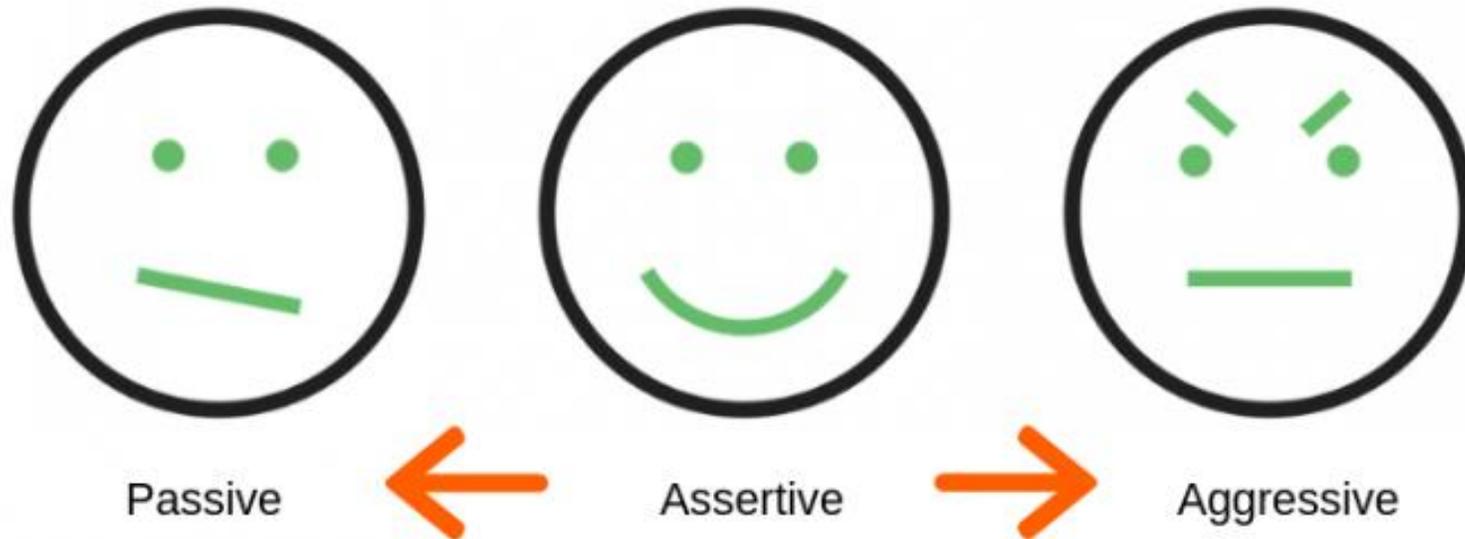
Traits of Aggressive communication

- Easily frustrated
- Use of criticism, humiliation, and domination
- Speaks in loud or overbearing way
- Frequently interrupts or does not listen
- Unwilling to compromise
- Disrespectful towards others

Group discussion/talking points



Where do you think you fall on the scale?



What are the barriers to being assertive?

Some examples might be...

- Lack of self-esteem
- The pressure on women to look after other people at all times
- Overwhelming emotions and difficulty tolerating feelings of stress/anger

Tips for being more assertive

- **Know your limits**

Before becoming involved in a situation, know what's acceptable to you, and what isn't. It's best to be *as specific as possible*, or you might be pulled into the trap of giving just a little bit more, over and over, until you've given far too much.

- **Know your values**

Every person's limits are different, and they're often determined by their personal values. For example, if you value family above all else, this might lead to stricter limits on how late you will stay at work, away from family. Know what's most important to you, and protect it.

Tips continued...

- **Listen to your emotions**

If you notice feels of discomfort or resentment, don't bury them. Try to understand what your feelings are telling you. Resentment, for example, can often be traced to feelings of being taken advantage of.

- **Have self-respect**

If you always give in to others, make sure you are showing as much respect to yourself as you show to others. Boundaries that are too open might be due to misguided attempts to be liked by elevating other people's needs above one's own.

- **Have respect for others**

Be sure that your actions are not self-serving, at the expense of others. Interactions should not be about winning, or taking as much as possible. Instead, consider what's fair for everyone, given the setting and relationship. You might "win", but at the cost of a relationship's long-term health.

Tips continued...

- **Be assertive**

When you know it's time to set a boundary, don't be shy. Say "no" respectfully, but without ambiguity. If you can make a compromise while respecting your own boundaries, try it. This is a good way to soften the "no", while showing respect to everyone involved.

- **Consider the long view**

Some days you will give more than you take, and other days you will take more than you give. Be willing to take a longer view of relationships, when appropriate. But if you're *always* the one who's giving or taking, there might be a problem.