

# Assertiveness Skills

Imagine for a moment how much more productive and satisfying life may be as you further develop your assertiveness skills.

Always  
**HESITATING**  
to express your opinion?

Standing up for yourself and your beliefs is necessary for healthy relationships at home, work, and play. An assertive person is able to respect the convictions of another while clearly expressing his or her own needs and wants.

## TYPES OF PERSONALITIES

Many people confuse being assertive with being aggressive. While assertive people respectfully communicate their desires, aggressive people violate the values of others. Here are some common categories of communication styles:

- **Assertive** - An assertive person clearly and respectfully communicates what they want and stands up for themselves if they feel taken advantage of or if their rights are threatened.
- **Passive** - These individuals tend to avoid conflict at all costs and find it easier to attend to the thoughts and

feelings of others more than their own.

- **Aggressive** - Aggressive communicators tend to disregard the feelings of others, become easily angered and often come across as bullies.
- **Passive-Aggressive** - Passive-aggressive individuals avoid addressing issues up front and instead hide behind sarcasm and complain about others behind their backs.

- ✓ Avoid taking on responsibility for how another feels about what you are saying.
- ✓ Make eye contact, (where culturally appropriate) stay calm and stand, or sit up straight.
- ✓ Avoid blaming, as this causes people to become defensive and not listen.
- ✓ Avoid words like “always” and “never” when angry.
- ✓ Do your best to keep the mood light. Laughter and humor are excellent coping mechanisms.

## ASSERTIVENESS BENEFITS

Being assertive has many advantages over operating as a passive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive person.

- Others respect your views
- Ability to set healthy boundaries by saying no
- Less stress
- Greater self-confidence
- Better life decisions
- Job satisfaction
- Honest and open relationships

## KEEP IN MIND

There are many benefits to being assertive and you're not alone in your effort to cease being passive, aggressive or passive-aggressive in your approach. Consider engaging a life coach or counselor for guidance on next steps.

***What steps will you take today to start standing up, speaking up and respecting yourself as well as others?***

## ACTION STEPS

Being assertive may not come naturally to everyone. Just because your typical communication style differs doesn't mean that you can't become more assertive. Here are some practical ways to become a more effective communicator and stand up for yourself:

- ✓ Use “I” statements as opposed to “you” statements.
- ✓ Practice saying no; be matter of fact and avoid long-winded explanations.