

What is Assertiveness?

Assertiveness is a communication style in which we are able to confidently and clearly express our needs, wants, and points of view, while recognizing and respecting that the people with whom we are communicating also have the right to their own needs, wants, and points of view.

When we communicate in an assertive way, we speak in a calm, clear voice and are specific about our needs. We do not judge or blame, and we “own” our thoughts and feelings, which means that we take full responsibility for the way we feel and what we think, say or do. Assertive communicators are looking for a “win-win” situation and are willing to compromise to get there.

In addition to assertiveness, we can also communicate in a passive or aggressive way. Passive communicators do not stand up for their rights or beliefs. They may be afraid of looking foolish or fearful of confronting others, or they may simply be so worried about being liked that they won't risk alienating others by expressing a different point of view.

Aggressive communicators tend to be bullies. They try to force their agenda by humiliating or intimidating others. Aggressors want to win all the time.

No one communicates in a single style 100% of the time: we tend to move between the three styles as the situation dictates. Our goal, however, should be to communicate assertively most of the time.



Assertiveness

What it is

Why you want it

How to get it



Milestone HCQU Northwest

247 Hospital Drive
Warren, PA 16365

Phone: 814-728-9400

Fax: 814-728-8887

E-mail: hcqunw@MilestonePA.org

To request this training, please contact:

Milestone HCQU Northwest

Telephone: 814-728-9400

Assertiveness

Why Do I Want It?

Having or developing assertive communication skills can help improve our self-esteem; develop better decision-making skills; lead to happier, healthier relationships; help us gain the respect of others; and give us a better sense of control. And all of these can help reduce the stress in our lives.

How Do I Get It?

The first step toward developing assertiveness skills is to determine where you are now. Do you have trouble accepting constructive criticism? Do you have trouble saying “no”? Do you express anger and annoyance appropriately? Do you ask for help when you need it? If you answered yes to these questions, you may benefit from developing assertive communication skills.

- Honesty is the best policy. Be honest, open, and direct about your needs, wants, and opinions.
- Be honest when giving or receiving complements. Never ‘brush off’ or put down a complement, and don’t give one if it’s not sincere.
- Learn to say “NO”. Taking on too many responsibilities or saying ‘yes’ to something you really don’t want to do will only hurt you and the person you were trying to help in the long run.
- Learn to say “I don’t know”. No one has the answer to every question, so don’t be afraid to say so when you don’t.

- Own your thoughts and feelings; never blame them on someone else. Use “I” statements (“I am disappointed that you were late for lunch again”) rather than “you” statements (“You let me down again”). “I” statements put the responsibility where it lies, with us; whereas “you” statements are blaming and accusatory.
- Use appropriate tone of voice, eye contact, and body language. Maintain a respectful distance between yourself and the person to whom you are speaking.
- Practice assertive listening: let the person know you are interested in what they have to say. Ask for and give feedback to show that you understand and are being understood.
- Another aspect of assertive communication is knowing when to stop talking. Following an assertive statement, such as: “I want you to be honest with me,” with a question, such as “Okay?” or “Know what I mean/” detracts from the assertiveness of the statement.

The best way to develop assertiveness skills is PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. Get together with friends, family, or co-workers and role play situations where you wish you had been more assertive until you feel confident in your ability to be assertive when future situations arise. Keep in mind that you will make mistakes—we all do! That is just part of being human. If you make a mistake, own up to

The Assertive Person has the right to:

1. decide how to lead your own life, including pursuing your own dreams/goals and how to achieve them.
2. have your own values, beliefs, opinions, and emotions and respecting yourself for them, no matter what others think.
3. not justify or explain yourself. You do not have to apologize for your thoughts, feelings, or actions.
4. tell others how you want to be treated.
5. say “no”, “I don’t know”, “I don’t understand”, or even “I don’t care”, and to take time to formulate your thoughts before you speak.
6. ask for help or information without being made to feel bad about your needs.
7. change your mind, make mistakes, and act illogically, with full understanding of the consequences.
8. like yourself, imperfections and all.
9. have positive, satisfying relationships in which you are free to express your feelings honestly, and the right to end relationships that do not meet your needs or desires.
10. live your life the way you choose and to change direction any time for any reason.