



# Assertive Communication

## Did you know...

...There are many reasons you might want to use assertive communication:

- To share ideas, feelings, and opinions honestly
- To ask for what you want
- To express appreciation
- To speak up when someone or something bothers you
- To say "no" when you don't want to do something

...Being assertive shows that you respect yourself because you're willing to stand up for your interests and express your thoughts and feelings.

...Being assertive demonstrates that you recognize and respect the rights of others.

...Being assertive is the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an honest and direct way.

...Being assertive allows us to take responsibility for our actions and ourselves without judging or blaming other people.

...Passive, assertive, and aggressive communication form a continuum of different types of communication.

...Being assertive has benefits:

- Increases self-confidence
- Increases self-esteem
- Helps express emotions
- Gains respect from others
- Helps you communicate honestly

...Being assertive is a learned skill that improves with practice.

**Demonstrate these behaviors to master assertive communication.**

### Nonverbal Behaviors

- Check your body and mind for clues about how you feel. Calm down if you have strong feelings. Breathe normally, without holding your breath.
- Demonstrate confidence. Stand or sit up straight with relaxed shoulders and arms and look at the other person.
- Talk in a friendly, relaxed way.
- Keep your voice at a normal speaking level, not too soft or too loud.

### Verbal Behaviors

- Speak honestly about your feelings, needs, and opinions.
- Speak without hesitating or saying you're sorry.
- Use simple "I-statements" to let others know what you're thinking without sounding accusatory.
  - Try this: "I disagree."
  - Avoid this: "You're wrong."
- Use an expanded version of an "I-statement" to express appreciation or if something bothers you.
  - If you appreciate what someone has done, tell the person:
    - What he or she did
    - How you feel about what he or she did
    - What you liked about what he or she did
 Try this: "Thanks for helping me with my math. I feel more confident that I'll pass the test."
  - If something bothers you, tell the person:
    - What he or she did
    - How you feel about what he or she did
    - The impact on you because of what he or she did
    - What you'd like he or she to do instead
 Try this: "When your part of the project wasn't finished, I was angry. Our group grade will be lower than I had hoped. Next time, I hope you will finish your part on time."
- When someone pressures you to do something you don't want to do, say "No" clearly and directly. Then, suggest another activity or walk away.



### Tips

- If what you want to say is difficult to talk about, rehearse it. Try writing what you want to say first; then, say it out loud. You might even try practicing with a friend.

### Your Assignment

- Create a teaching tool that explains and demonstrates your assigned skill.
- Your presentation will be evaluated on:
  - thorough and accurate explanation of the skill.
  - accurate and clear demonstration of the skill.
- You have up to five minutes to present your skill.
- Option: Research additional data on the skill and note the source.