

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

Learn how to more effectively
communicate with others.

This will be a fun and informative
workshop!

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LACK OF ASSERTIVENESS

EXAMPLES

- Allowing others to coerce you into thinking their way
- Not being able to express your positive or negative feelings freely
- Losing control and becoming angry at those who don't deserve it; in other words, taking out your anger on another person instead of the one you are really angry with



WHAT IS ASSERTIVENESS?

- Ryan and Travis in The Wellness Workbook state that “assertiveness basically means the ability to express your thoughts and feelings in a way that clearly states your needs and keeps the lines of communication open with the other.”



WHAT DOES ASSERTIVENESS DO FOR YOU?

- It allows you to be open, honest, and direct about what you need and want without offending the person you are talking to.
- It allows the other person a chance to let you know what he/she needs and wants so that a compromise can be met.
- It helps you to be more self-confident, exert more self-control in difficult situations, and gain the respect of others.



EXPRESSING YOUR NEEDS

In order to express your needs, you must know that you have certain rights.

Those rights are:

- To have your own goals, dreams, and priorities in life
- To have your own set of values, beliefs, opinions, and emotions and the right to defend such, if needed



EXPRESSING YOUR NEEDS

Your rights (continued):

- To not have to justify or explain your actions or feelings to others
- To be able to tell others how you wish to be treated
- To express yourself positively or negatively as you see fit and to take the time to formulate those thoughts before expressing them. If you are angry, take the time to calm down before approaching the other person so that you can think clearly.

EXPRESSING YOUR NEEDS

Your rights (continued):

- To ask for help or information without feeling bad about asking
- To change your mind, make mistakes, or act illogically –as long as you are willing to accept the consequences
- To accept yourself as you are and sometimes not do your very best

EXPRESSING YOUR NEEDS

Your rights (continued):

- To have positive, satisfying relationships where you can express yourself openly and honestly and can feel comfortable; and to change or end relationships that don't satisfy you
- To change or improve your life; for example, by going back to school, getting a better job, or making more positive friends

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE THESE RIGHTS?

- You may react passively when circumstances and events arise in your life
- You may allow others' opinions and feelings to become more important than your own
- Because of this, you may start to feel hurt, anxious, or angry when you don't express your needs to the other person
- You may think that by expressing your needs and wants, you are being selfish; but implicit in assertiveness is the fact that you are concerned for others' needs and wants too.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING ASSERTIVE AND BEING AGGRESSIVE?

Have you ever met someone you thought was “too assertive”? Well, if you felt like YOUR rights were being run over, that person was being aggressive and not assertive at all!

Being assertive means that you are expressing your needs and wants and seeking feedback from the other individual so that he/she can express his/her needs and wants. Then a compromise can be agreed upon.



AGGRESSIVENESS

You express your rights, needs, and wants, but at the expense, degradation, or humiliation of another. In other words, you are being selfish.

It can involve being verbally, emotionally, and physically forceful. This often causes others to be angry, to become vengeful, and to lose respect for you.

You may feel superior and “right” at the time, but you may feel guilty later. It is hard to take back harsh words once they have been spoken.



WHAT ASSERTIVENESS WILL NOT DO

- It does not guarantee happiness or fair treatment.
- It will not solve all of your personal problems.
- It will not guarantee that others will act assertively too and not aggressively.
- It does not guarantee that you will get what you want.
- However, conflict in relationships will definitely continue unless assertiveness is used.



TECHNIQUES FOR ASSERTIVENESS

- Be specific and clear about what you want, think, or feel.
- Picking a time to discuss things when you and the other person are not angry will make being assertive more likely to be successful. When a person is angry, he/she tends not to “hear” what someone else is trying to say to him/her.
- Use “I” statements as much as possible. Examples include:

I want to...

I don't want you to....

I liked it when you did that.



TECHNIQUES FOR ASSERTIVENESS

- You should explain exactly what you mean or do not mean. Example:

I don't want to break up over this, but I think we need to talk about how we can prevent this from happening again.
- Be direct by talking to the person for whom it is intended. Don't go around talking to other people he/she knows hoping that he/she gets the message.



TECHNIQUES FOR ASSERTIVENESS

- Own your message.
- It often causes resistance and resentment, rather than cooperation and understanding, when you suggest someone should change for his/her benefit, when in actuality it would please you.
- Use “I” statements to express *your* frame of reference, *your* perception of right and wrong or good and bad.



TECHNIQUES FOR ASSERTIVENESS

- Ask for feedback.
- This can clear up misperceptions that you may have.
- It can also help others to see that you are simply expressing your opinion and not a demand.
- Encourage others to be specific and direct with their feedback.



PRACTICING YOUR NEW SKILLS

- It is best to practice these new skills on those who already know and love you. They will be more supportive as you fine tune what and how you plan to say things.
- This way, you can practice the nonverbal communication as well as the verbal communication.
- It is not just *what* you say, but *how* you say it. Voice tone, gestures, eye contact, facial expression, and posture also influence your impact on other people.



ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

We hope that you have enjoyed this workshop and have learned a lot of useful tips.

Please print the evaluation from the TRiO website, fill it out, and return it to Patricia Nicholas in Rm. 114, Bldg. B; Kayla Owens in Rm. 110, Bldg. B; or Tawanie Shanks in the TRiO lab, Bldg. B.

Most of the material for this workshop came from the website <http://www2.csusm.edu/caps/Assertiveness.html> and is to be used for educational purposes only.