

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

A Healthy Communication Style

Assertive communication involves expressing your thoughts, feelings, and needs in a clear and respectful way, while also considering the perspectives of others. It allows you to advocate for yourself without becoming passive or aggressive.

Key Characteristics of Assertiveness

Assertive communication is reflected in both what you say and how you say it.

- Clearly expressing needs, wants, and boundaries
- Maintaining appropriate eye contact
- Listening without interrupting
- Using a calm, steady tone of voice
- Speaking at an appropriate volume
- Demonstrating confident and open body language

Building Assertive Communication Skills

- Value your needs:
- Your thoughts, feelings, and boundaries are important. You are allowed to express them while still being respectful of others.
- Communicate calmly and directly:
- Avoid shutting down, raising your voice, or placing blame. Focus on expressing yourself clearly and respectfully. Using “I” statements can help:
- “I feel...”
- “I need...”
- “I would prefer...”
- Prepare ahead of time:
- If a conversation feels difficult, take a moment to think through what you want to say so you can communicate more clearly.
- Set limits when needed:
- It is okay to say “no.” You do not need to over-explain or justify your decision. Clear and respectful boundaries support healthy relationships.

Examples of Assertive Communication

- “I’ve been feeling overwhelmed managing everything on my own. I would appreciate more support so we can find a better balance.”
- “I’m not able to commit to that this weekend. I need time to rest and recharge.”
- “I’m having difficulty concentrating with the noise. Would you be open to finding a quieter solution?”

Practice Reflection

Before responding in a situation, pause and consider:

- What am I feeling right now?
- What do I need in this moment?
- How can I communicate this clearly and respectfully?