

WHAT IS ASSERTIVENESS?

Assertiveness: Assertiveness is expressing your feelings, needs and wants in a manner that is confident and honest while considering and respecting the feelings and views of others.

NON-VERBAL ASPECTS OF ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

1. Eye Contact- Looking directly at a person helps to communicate your sincerity and to increase the directness of your message. Do not stare too intently or the person may feel uncomfortable. If you look away too much, you will convey a lack of confidence.
2. Body Posture- An active, erect posture facing the person directly will help communicate assertiveness. Sometimes when you are trying to stand up for yourself, you may decide to do just that- stand up (particularly if the other person is standing).
3. Distance/Physical Contact- Distance from another person has a considerable effect on communication. Being too close may frighten or intimidate someone-it may be interpreted as aggressive. Being too far away from someone may weaken the message that you are trying to
4. Facial Expressions- It is important that a person's facial expression matches what he/she is communicating. Sometimes people grin when they are trying to express anger. One's anger will not be taken seriously unless one's expression is serious.
5. Voice Tone/Volume- The way we use our voice is one of the most vital elements of assertive communication. Imagine the same words spoken in three different ways:
 - 1) Through clenched teeth in anger;
 - 2) Shouted with joy;
 - 3) Whispered in fear.They would suggest three different messages. The loudness of your voice also affects the way your message is received.
6. Fluency- Is the ability to speak smoothly with a comfortable flow of words. Speech that is too rapid or that has long periods of hesitation is less persuasive and difficult to listen to. Listeners may get bored or think one is unsure of oneself.

RELATIONSHIP ASPECTS OF ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

7. Timing- It is important to consider timing when being assertive. Mostly, it is best to assert oneself spontaneously but often that may not be appropriate. For example, it is probably not wise to confront someone in front of a group because he/she will be more defensive. You may also need some time to think about what you are going to say.
8. Listening- Listening while being assertive involves an active commitment to the other person. It requires your full attention. It demonstrates your respect for the other person and involves tuning in to the other person and actively attempting to understand him or her.
9. Content- It is much more effective to state how you feel as opposed to calling someone a name. Use "I" statements such as "I feel angry" in order to take responsibility for your feelings rather than blaming the other person as in, "You make me so mad!"