

What is assertive communication?

Assertive communication is a communication style of sharing your thoughts, opinions, feelings, and needs in a clear, straightforward, and respectful manner.

Why is assertive communication important?

Assertive communication may help you to reduce stress, speak up for yourself, set clear boundaries, and improve relationships with others. Using assertive communication can help you request permission to go to a doctor's appointment, ask for a raise, report safety issues in the workplace, and resolve conflict with coworkers. Just like anything, it takes practice to be an assertive communicator.

What does assertive communication look like?

- Clear, direct, specific, and appropriate to the situation
- Feels honest and sincere
- Respectful of others' thoughts, opinions, feelings, and needs
- Does not threaten, blame, shame, or attack

What can you do to communicate more assertively?

How you communicate has an important impact on your daily interactions with others. Effective communication is essential to relationships, family and workplace environments, and society.



Speak up. No one knows better than you what you think, feel, want, or need. You can be your best champion.



Use “I” statements. Learn to clearly express what you think, feel, want, or need and why. Try not to focus solely on what you think others may have done or failed to do. Practice using the “I” statement formula:

I feel ____ when ____ because ____ + proposed solution ____.

For example, “I feel frustrated when my suggestions for improving processes are ignored because I think we could be more efficient. I would like the opportunity to share my idea at the next team meeting.”



Be self-aware. Understanding yourself could help you control how you interact with other people. Step back, reflect, and challenge yourself to recognize why you may think or feel a certain way.



Plan what you want to say. If you think that the conversation may be difficult, you can write down the main points you want to share. Having a plan, outline, or at least key words can help you manage the conversation, get your point across, and be more assertive.



Be courteous and listen. Give the other person their turn to share what they think and feel. You cannot control how others think, what they may say, or how they say it. Listen without interrupting. Listen to understand. A conversation goes two ways so both sides need to have the chance to share.



Avoid judgment and exaggeration. Not everyone thinks the same way. Be open to listening to what the other person wants, needs, and how they are feeling too. Be truthful, specific, and try not to criticize, blame, or attack others.



Be aware of your tone, eye contact, and body posture. Consider how the tone of your voice may impact the message you want to share with the other person. Keep your voice at a normal volume and speak steadily and calmly. Choose your words wisely. Stand or sit up straight and look at the other person. Try to be at the same eye level. Remember, non-verbal communication can be powerful. Ensure that your body language and words align.



Timing and location. A conversation is better if you are relaxed so choose a time when you are able to express yourself clearly and appropriately. If possible, choose a place where you feel comfortable to talk.

Resources

NATIONAL SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Provides free and confidential support for people in distress and prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

- Call 988
- Text “HELLO” to 988
- <https://988lifeline.org>

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

Provides crisis intervention, domestic violence education, safety planning, and referrals to local service providers and agencies that provide legal, economic self-sufficiency, sexual assault, elder abuse, children’s assistance and other related services.

- Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- www.thehotline.org

RURAL RESPONSE HOTLINE

Offers access to legal and financial assistance, disaster relief, and emotional support including no-cost vouchers for confidential mental health services.

- Call 1-800-464-0258
- www.farmhotline.com

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FARMWORKER HEALTH

Provides information, education, and referrals to health care and supportive services and may assist with financial resources and/or interpretation.

- Call 1-800-377-9968
- WhatsApp 1-737-414-5121

FIND RESOURCES IN YOUR STATE

- Call 211
- www.farmstress.org



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