

## Assertive Communication

Primarily, individuals are assisted in achieving a sense of their rights and an ability to clearly state their wants, needs and desires. Individuals are encouraged to move from “suffering in silence” to identifying unsatisfying situations or ones that clearly violate their basic rights. With this knowledge they are empowered to respond in a new and more personally gratifying manner to meet their own needs.

Use “I” Messages:

- Use “I” statements to declare negative emotions and dissatisfaction
- Keeps door open- resolution
- Speaks for self, e.g. “I feel, I think”
- Shares, discloses feelings and thoughts, “I feel really tired now and would like some time to myself.”
- Gives information, e.g. “When you are late for our meetings, I feel angry because I think that my time is not important to you.”

Describe:

- Describe the other person’s behaviour objectively
- Describe a specified incident
- Describe the action and not the motive

Express:

- Express your feelings
- Express them calmly
- Share personal experiences, opinions and feelings with confidence. Your viewpoint counts.
- State feelings in a positive manner, relating to a goal to be achieved
- Direct yourself to the specific offending behaviour, not the whole person

Request:

- Ask explicitly for change in the other person’s behaviour
- Clearly state what you want, need or prefer.
- Request a small change
- Request only one or two changes at a time
- Pose questions to tradition or authority when you are not satisfied with just going along.
- Specify the concrete actions you want to see stopped and those you want to see performed
- Take into account whether the other person can meet your request without suffering large losses
- Resolve frustrations and minor irritations before they escalate into major catastrophes and explosions of anger.
- Say no when you mean no. Saying yes will lead to feelings of resentment.

From:

Family Services: Employee Assistance Program. Assertive Communication Handout from Women and Anger Presentation. Peurifoy, Renau Z. (1995). Anxiety, Phobias, and Panic: A Step-by-Step Program for Regaining Control of Your Life. Tools for Trauma (4th Ed), Traumatology Institute. 2014