

Assertive Communication

🕒 Time: 15 Minutes


📊 Difficulty: Easy

Assertive communication is a style in which a person directly and openly expresses their thoughts, feelings, and needs in a way that is respectful of themselves and others. This style of communication is characterized by direct and honest expression, and it allows individuals to stand up for themselves and their beliefs while also considering the needs and perspectives of others.

In contrast, aggressive communication is a style in which a person expresses their thoughts, feelings, and needs in a way that is domineering, hostile, or demanding. This style of communication often involves interrupting, yelling, or using manipulative language to get what the person wants, and it often ignores the needs and perspectives of others.

Passive communication, on the other hand, is a style in which a person avoids expressing their thoughts, feelings, and needs directly. This style of communication often involves not speaking up for oneself, avoiding confrontation, and failing to assert one's boundaries. It often leads to people feeling unheard, unappreciated, and resentful.

Overall, assertive communication is the most effective and healthy style of communication because it allows individuals to express themselves honestly and directly while also considering the needs and perspectives of others. It helps to build trust, foster healthy relationships, and resolve conflicts effectively.

 Passive Communication	 Assertive Communication	 Aggressive Communication
Give in	Find a compromise	Demand & take
Believe that your needs don't matter	Acknowledge that your needs matter as much as everybody else's	Believe that only your needs matter
Letting yourself be bullied	Standing up for yourself	Bullying others
Not expressing your opinion	Talking and actively listening	Interrupting people
Other people begin to respect you less	People respect you for your balanced communication	Other people either fear you or don't respect you
Not stating your opinion	Clearly expressing your opinion	Insist on your opinion (demean others)

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Practice your assertive communication skills by filling in your response for the following scenarios. Make sure your answers directly address the main problem and how you would like it to be solved (compromise). Try to use language that's not overly passive or aggressive.

01 A coworker has been taking credit for your work in team meetings.

02 You're at a restaurant and the server brings you the wrong order.


03 Your partner has been neglecting their household chores and it's been causing problems in your relationship.

04 Your boss asks you to work on a project that you know is unrealistic and will be difficult to complete

05 Your friend asks to borrow money from you, but you know that you can't afford to lend it to them.

See a few examples on the next page →

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Examples of assertive responses:

01 A coworker has been taking credit for your work in team meetings.

I understand that you may not have realized that you were taking credit for my work in team meetings. However, it's important to me that everyone gets the recognition they deserve for their contributions. In the future, please make sure to give credit where it's due. I would appreciate it if you could acknowledge my work in future meetings and make sure that everyone knows who did what on our projects.



In this response, the person is expressing their needs and boundaries in a clear and direct way, without being aggressive or passive. They are also showing empathy and understanding for the other person's perspective, which can help to diffuse any potential conflict and improve the relationship.

02 You're at a restaurant and the server brings you the wrong order.

Excuse me, but I think there may have been a mistake with my order. Could I please have the correct dish? I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused, and I appreciate your help in getting this sorted out. Thank you.



In this response, the person is expressing their needs and boundaries in a clear and direct way, without being aggressive or passive.

03 Your partner has been neglecting their household chores and it's been causing problems in your relationship.

I understand that we're both busy, but it's important to me that we both contribute and keep our home in good shape. Can we talk about how we can divide up the chores more fairly, so that we can both feel more satisfied and our home can be a more comfortable and enjoyable place for both of us? I would really appreciate your input on this, and I'm open to finding a solution that works for both of us.



In this response, the person is expressing their needs and boundaries in a clear and direct way, without being aggressive or passive. They are also showing empathy and understanding for their partner's perspective, and offering to work together to find a solution. This can help to address the problem in a more positive and productive way.