

Counselling for assertiveness

Assertiveness is a behaviour wherein we can express our rights and stand up for ourselves without giving in or hurting others. Individuals who are assertive can express their values, beliefs and feelings while maintaining confidence.

Sometimes, however, people take on more of a passive role where they try to please everyone else, or an aggressive role where they assume that they are always correct. These behaviours often lead to negative relationships, whereas being assertive tends to create stronger and longer lasting relationships.

If you feel that you could learn to be more assertive there are many skills available to you and it starts with changing your own mind about how we perceive others and how we think they perceive us.

Counselling focuses on debunking many of the fears people have about being assertive (people will not like me, creates arguments) and creating an awareness of different personalities (passive, assertive, aggressive).

Once the benefits of assertion are understood counselling emphasizes skills to be more assertive via communication and body language.



Why do people avoid being assertive?

Many people avoid being assertive because they confuse being assertive with being aggressive. Aggressiveness violates the rights of others. Assertiveness is a respectful communication of your own rights.

Another reason people avoid asserting themselves is fear of upsetting others or damaging relationships. However, avoiding assertiveness may damage relationships more in the long run, by causing feelings of resentment or mistrust to build.

Being assertive empowers you to express yourself in an honest way with others. It also allows others to know what you want or need from them, making it more likely that they will meet your needs. In other words, assertiveness can be a great tool in helping you build strong, respectful, supportive relationships with loved ones, classmates, and co-workers.

How assertive are you?

Ask yourself the following questions to get an idea of how comfortable you are being assertive.

- Do you ask for help when you need it?
- Do you express anger and annoyance appropriately?
- Do you ask questions when you're confused?
- Do you volunteer your opinions when you think or feel differently from others?
- Do you speak up in class fairly frequently?
- Are you able to say "no" when you don't want to do something?
- Do you generally speak in a confident manner?
- Do you look at people when you're talking to them?

Am I assertive?

Read the questions and keep track of how many times you answer yes.

I am comfortable meeting new people in social situations .	I am able to say "no" without feeling guilty or anxious.	I can express strong feelings such as anger, frustration or disappointment.
I can easily request help and information from others.	I feel capable of learning new things and performing new tasks.	I am able to acknowledge and take responsibility for my own mistakes .
I can discuss my beliefs without judging those who don't agree with me.	I am able to express my honest opinion to others, even if they don't agree.	I tell others when their behavior is not acceptable to me.
I can speak confidently in group situations .	I believe my needs are as important as those of others and should be considered.	I can assert my beliefs even when the majority disagrees with me.
I can express anger or disappointment without blaming others.	I am comfortable delegating tasks to others.	I value my own experience and wisdom.

How many times did you answer yes?

+
More than 10
You are consistently assertive and probably handle most situations well.

-
Less than 10
Learning assertive behavior techniques would boost your score. Read the article closely.

How to be assertive

Being assertive can be difficult for many people, for many different reasons. However, all of us can benefit from knowing and respecting our own values, boundaries, and needs. If you know what you want and what you believe going into a situation, it can be easier to express yourself in a clear and assertive manner to others.