

TIME	ACTIVITY	TOOLS
Make sure you have 30 mins available to prepare your group before it starts.	<p>Preparation before the session</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure audio visual technology is set up 2. Flip chart or white board and markers 3. Print individual participants handouts for those who would like to do some further self-paced activity <p>Allow up to ONE hour to complete your group</p> <p>Facilitator’s Tip: ~This session requires that you and your participants take part in a role-play. When people feel good about themselves and emotionally safe within the learning environment, they will be more likely to engage in activities. Think about how you can you make the facilitation space a safe environment. Are there any supportive conversations you can have prior to the group starting?</p>	Smart TV/Computer Print handouts if needed
10 mins	<p>Acknowledgements – Welcome to Country and Lived Experience Group Agreement ~ This is a great way to establish boundaries, you can find out more and a template in the Facilitator Guide</p>	Butchers paper/white board
5mins	<p>Discuss Aim and Objectives (display for everyone to see): Can be accessed here.</p> <p>AIM: Participants explore different communication styles and how assertive communication can help build healthier communication strategies in social and personal settings.</p> <p>OBJECTIVES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare and contrast the three different communication styles. 2. Actively demonstrate ways to practice assertive communication 3. Reflect on and discuss the benefits of adopting healthier communication styles and how these connect to one’s IRP. 	Can be displayed on smart TV or computer White-board or paper
10mins	<p>Watch the video Assert Yourself (8 mins in length): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZ-T1gghyIY</p>	Computer or smart TV

20mins	Complete activity A and B. Be sure to read out each part of the Participant resource to cater for those who prefer not to read. Encourage group discussion (space is provided if participants wish to write their answers) Each question should help prompt open and honest discussions. Click here to access.	Participant Resource, pens
5mins	Reflection Come back to the outcomes and aim, ask your group the key messages they took away from the group.	
5mins	Hand out feedback form and collect (scan and send back to L2B team after you group)	Feedback forms
5 mins AFTER YOUR GROUP	Self-Reflection (This is time for you to reflect on your own strengths and challenges) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were the strengths of this group? 2. What could be improved on next time? How could I run this differently? 3. What area's might I need extra support in? how will I action this? 	Fill out in a workbook, diary or the space provided here.

Assert Yourself

Aim:

Participants explore different communication styles and discover how assertive communication can help build healthier communication strategies in social and personal settings.

Objectives:

1. Compare and contrast the three different communication styles.
2. Actively demonstrate ways to practice assertive communication.
3. Reflect on and discuss the benefits of adopting healthier communication styles and how these connect to one's Individual Recovery Plan (IRP).

Assert Yourself – Participant Resource

ACTIVITY A – Assert Yourself

It's time to bring out your inner performer!

Pick one of the following phrases or create your own. Recite the sentence out loud to your group 3 times using the three different communication styles, 'passive, aggressive and assertive'.

You can add words, miss words, and show physical traits based on the style you are trying to portray. Notice how you feel (your emotions and your physical state) in each style.

Remember being assertive isn't being bossy, this is about respecting your needs without putting the other person down or disrespecting them.

The first three phrases include hints (in green text) on how we can make these sentences more assertive.

1. "It looks like it's going to rain, it would be great if you could bring the washing in"

"It looks like it's going to rain, would you be able to bring the washing in?
Getting that job out of the way is important to me, thank you".

2. "I can't take on any more tasks at the moment".

"I understand there's a lot to do, but I'd like for us to plan how we can best achieve the tasks together, I am unable to take on any more work right now".

3. "Your opinions are interesting, let's agree to disagree".

"I value your opinions, but let's agree to disagree this time".

4. "I'm not ready for a relationship, don't call me again".

5. "I am a vegetarian, are we able to make sure the next time we go out a place that caters for me too?"

6. "We've watched Friends three days in a row, can I have a turn to pick next time?"

7. "It looks like you like all the blue smarties, but can you leave some for me next time?"

8. "I'm not sure if I should ask this, but can you we go for a walk on your next visit with me? I feel annoyed just talking about my feelings all the time".

ACTIVITY B – Assert Yourself

The following questions are important in understanding your recovery journey. Discuss as a group:

1. Can you explain the benefits of adopting an assertive style (for you and others around you)? How did you *feel* when you took on an assertive style in the exercise above? This might indicate some of the positive benefits this style will bring into your life.
2. In what ways will these characteristics support your recovery journey, and can you add assertive communication to your Individual Recovery Plan?
3. How can you go about adopting an assertive communication style into your life? Are there any supports you need to put in place?

The following page provides you with an extra resource should your participants want to continue learning in their own time.

assertive communication

Assertiveness means expressing your point of view in a way that is clear and direct, while still respecting others. Communicating in an assertive manner can help you to minimise conflict, to control anger, to have your needs better met, and to have more positive relationships with friends, family and others.

Assertiveness is a style of communication which many people struggle to put into practice, often because of confusion around exactly what it means. Sometimes it helps to start by explaining what assertiveness is *not*:

Aggressive Communication

People often confuse assertiveness with aggression, because it involves sticking up for yourself. But the two are actually quite different:



Aggression	Assertiveness
Force your needs or opinions onto others.	Express your needs clearly but respectfully.
Often involves bullying or pushing others around.	Others are treated with respect.
Only your needs matter.	Considers the needs of others as well as yours.
No compromise.	Often compromise.
Damages relationships.	Stronger relationships.
May lead to shouting or physical aggression.	Using clear language to get point across.
Damages self-esteem	Builds self-esteem

For example, imagine you are standing in line at the bank and someone else pushes in front of you. An aggressive response could be to grab them by the shoulder and say loudly:

Hey! What makes you so important that you don't have to wait in line like the rest of us?

This might make you feel better in the short term, but you will probably also spend the rest of the hour feeling annoyed about the interaction. Or perhaps the other person will shout back at you and the situation will get even worse, *really* leaving you in a bad mood.

A more assertive response could be to gently tap the person on the shoulder and say in a clear but respectful voice:

Excuse me, there is actually a line here. It would be better if you could wait your turn like the rest of us.

Chances are you will get a more positive response to this - perhaps the other person will apologise and move to the back of the line, or they may explain their reason for wanting to push in and you may feel happy to do them this favour. They may still respond badly - your assertiveness does not guarantee others will not be aggressive - but at least you will feel good knowing that you did your best and used assertive communication.

Passive Communication

Another thing that assertiveness is *not* is passive communication. Passive communication is:

- Not speaking up for yourself, either because you think your views don't matter or for reasons like trying to please everyone or 'keep the peace'
- Putting your needs last to the needs of others
- Allowing yourself to be bullied or ignored
- Often involves speaking quietly or with a hesitating voice, or with body-language like looking at the floor or shrugging the shoulders
- You may undermine your opinions with passive phrases such as: *only if you don't mind*, or: *but it really doesn't matter that much to me*



Passive communication can be damaging to your self-esteem, and also to relationships. If you use a passive communication style, others are more likely to ignore your needs, which may leave you feeling hurt or even angry with them for not treating you better.

So Assertiveness is....



Think of assertiveness as the halfway point between passive and aggressive - just the right balance!

Here are some tips for practicing being assertive:

- State your point of view or request clearly.
- Tell the other person how you feel as honestly as you can, and remember to *listen* to what they say as well.
- Tone and volume of voice: *how* you say it is as important as *what* you say. Speak at a normal conversation volume, rather than a shout or whisper, and make sure that you sound firm but not aggressive.
- Make sure your body language matches. Your listener will get mixed messages if you are speaking firmly while looking at the floor. Try to look the other person in the eye, stand tall, and relax your face.
- Try to avoid exaggerating with words like *always* and *never*. For example: *You are 20 minutes late and it is the third time this week*, rather than: *You are always late!*
- Try to speak with facts rather than judgements. For example: *This report has important information missing*, rather than: *you have done a bad job again*.
- Use "I Statements" as much as possible, to tell the other person how you feel rather than being accusing. For example: *When you leave your dishes on the table, I feel frustrated because I don't like the mess but don't want to clean it up for you*, rather than: *You're such a pig!*
- Practice often - assertiveness is a skill which requires you to practice in many different situations. And don't forget to praise yourself for your good efforts!

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