




ASSERTIVENESS



RESILIENCE ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS

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AGGRESSIVE, PASSIVE, PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE AND ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR



Being assertive has been shown to predict being happy, feeling authentic, having positive relationships and having good self-esteem

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ASSERTIVE BODY LANGUAGE



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I. ASSERTIVE BODY LANGUAGE

- **Assertive body posture:**
 1. Direct eye contact (but not too much)
 2. Keep your head up – don't look down
 3. Movements should be minimal and slow
 1. nervous people tend to be jittery and their eyes move a lot
 4. Chest out and shoulders back, not hunched in
 5. Face the person or persons you are interacting with

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ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

A FOUR POINT PLAN

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I. START POSITIVE OR EMPATHIC

- **Empathise** with how they appear to be feeling
 - This may feel contrary to what you want to do! (you may want to blame them or accuse them of being unfair etc), but it will help you remain assertive and in control

OR

- **Say something positive** – I appreciate everything you've done for the project so far, and you clearly have good ideas, but...
 - Immediately shows the other person that you are not aggressing or launching a personal attack

OR BOTH

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2. EXPRESS YOUR VIEW: "I STATEMENTS"

Own *your* view and *your* interpretation of the situation

- When I
- I think that
- It seems to me that ...
- I feel that
- My concern is
- From my perspective...
- I feel frustrated because it seems to me that...

EXAMPLE

Aggressive: You are so annoying!

Assertive: I feel frustrated because I personally find how you are behaving to be...

Passive: Don't say anything at all and walk away

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3. LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

- Listen to their perspective as THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THE SITUATION
– nothing more
- Try to make sense of how they are perceiving the world, even though it may be one that you disagree with
- If you disagree with their account, note that and mention why after, again as an "I statement"

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4. FRAME THE PROBLEM + FOCUS ON FINDING A SOLUTION

- What do you agree on? Is there a problem that you can both agree to address?
- State that in *your view there appears to be a problem*, so a **solution** needs to be found – try to get their agreement on this, so they consent to help work towards a solution
- Try to (a) devise one together, (b) suggest that the other person seeks a solution, or (c) offer to come up with one yourself for them to consider



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SO IN SUMMARY, IN ANY CHALLENGING INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION, 4 STAGES

1. Start positively or empathically
2. State your view using “I statements” (+ relevant objective facts)
3. Listen to their view – acknowledge it as their view of the situation
4. Find a solution to the problem that you can both agree on

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SAYING 'NO' ASSERTIVELY

WHEN DEALING WITH EXCESSIVE DEMANDS

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WAYS OF SAYING "NO" ASSERTIVELY #1

1. **Refer to a principle or rule** - shows nothing personal in saying no, and can be done in a friendly way

Example: *A friend in need asks for a large emergency loan but you don't feel it is appropriate to provide them with the money given that you are unsure if they can pay it back*

What you could say: *"I understand that you have a difficult situation, but I have a rule that I don't lend money to friends."*

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WAYS OF SAYING “NO” ASSERTIVELY #2

2. Offset “no” with a positive alternative

Example: *A friend in need asks for a large emergency loan but you don't feel it is appropriate to provide them with the money given that you are unsure if they can pay it back*

What you could say: *"I understand that you have a difficult situation, but I have a rule that I don't lend money to friends...Let's sit down together soon and I can help you think up ways of raising the money."*

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TASK: EXAMPLE SCENARIOS



Breakout Rooms

- SCENARIO 1: You are working as a pair in a project, and the person you are paired with is not doing as much as work as you, and is not responding to your emails. You arrange an online meeting. **What do you do next?**
- SCENARIO 2: Your boss asks you forcefully to work at the weekend, but you can't. You arrange a meeting with him. **What do you do next?**

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IN A NUTSHELL

- MUCH STRESS IS CAUSED BY INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS
- ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE LIFE SKILLS OF USE IN A WIDE RANGE OF SITUATIONS
- THEY CAN REDUCE THE INTERPERSONAL STRESS YOU EXPERIENCE