

Personal Factsheet: Assertiveness



- Being assertive means respecting both your own rights and those of others, and being able to express clearly, your wants, needs, ideas and feelings.
- Don't confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness.
- You cannot be assertive with low self-esteem.

Key points

1. Most people have to work at being assertive
2. Being assertive means being able to say 'no'
3. Being assertive means being able to acknowledge your mistakes and accept criticism as well as praise
4. Being assertive is knowing when to speak out or to remain silent
5. Being assertive means recognising and balancing the wishes of others with your own
6. Assertive behaviour encourages others to be assertive
7. Being assertive is about behaving, as well as speaking, in a respectful way to others
8. People who are not assertive may behave aggressively or passively
9. Aggressive behaviour occurs when you believe your rights are more important than others
10. Passive behaviour occurs when you believe your rights are less important than others

Do's

1. Respect the needs and wishes of others as well as your own
2. Be clear about what you want before making a request
3. Use 'I' rather than 'we' or 'the company' when making a request
4. Remember your body language when making a request
5. Maintain eye contact
6. Keep the appropriate sitting or standing distance from people
7. Listen to what others have to say
8. Listen to what's behind the words not just the words
9. Aim for a win-win if you need to negotiate
10. Remember that you being assertive may mean that others respond aggressively

Don'ts

1. Think that being assertive is the same as being aggressive
2. Begin a request by apologising
3. Use words such as 'only' and 'sort of ' to water down a request
4. Use a loud or shrieking voice
5. Don't keep your eyebrows lowered or raised when talking to others
6. Don't stand hunched up or fiddle with things when talking to others
7. Jump to conclusions before you've heard what someone has to say
8. Be afraid to say 'no'
9. Give drawn out explanations for saying 'no '
10. Stop being assertive if someone is aggressive

