

# Assertive Communication



**Assertive Communication:** A communication style in which a person stands up for their own needs and wants, while also taking into consideration the needs and wants of others, without behaving passively or aggressively.

## Traits of Assertive Communicators

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- Clearly state needs and wants
- Eye contact
- Listens to others without interruption
- Appropriate speaking volume
- Steady tone of voice
- Confident body language

## Assertiveness Tips

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**Respect yourself.** Your needs, wants, and rights are as important as anyone else's. It's fine to express what you want, so long as you are respectful toward the rights of others.

**Express your thoughts and feelings calmly.** Giving the silent treatment, yelling, threatening, and shaming are all great examples of what not to do. Take responsibility for your emotions, and express them in a calm and factual manner. Try starting sentences with "I feel...".

**Plan what you're going to say.** Know your wants and needs, and how you can express them, before entering a conversation. Come up with specific sentences and words you can use.

**Say "no" when you need to.** You can't make everyone happy all the time. When you need to say "no", do so clearly, without lying about the reasons. Offer to help find another solution.

## Examples of Assertive Communication

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"I've been feeling frustrated about doing most of the chores around the house. I understand that you're busy, but I need help. How can we make this work?"

*The speaker takes responsibility for their feelings without blaming, and clearly describes their needs.*

"I won't be able to take you to the airport on Friday. I've had a long week, and I want to rest."

*The speaker respects their own needs and wants by clearly saying "no".*

"I'm having a hard time sleeping when your music is on. What if you use headphones, or I can help you move the speakers to another room."

*The speaker describes their needs, while also considering the needs and wants of the other person.*

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## Practice

**Tip:** Before responding, consider what your wants and needs might be in each situation.

**Your Partner:** “I know you have plans for the weekend, but I really need you to watch the kids. I have a friend coming to town, and we made plans.”

**Assertive Response:**

**Situation:** You’ve just received your food at a restaurant, and it was prepared incorrectly. Your sandwich seems to have extra mayo, instead of no mayo.

**Assertive Statement:**

**Your Friend:** “Hey, can I borrow some money? I want to buy these shoes, but I left my wallet at home. I’ll pay you back soon, I swear. It won’t be like last time.”

**Assertive Response:**

**Situation:** Your neighbor is adding an expansion to their house, and the crew starts working, very loudly, at 5 AM. It has woken you up every day for a week.

**Assertive Statement:**