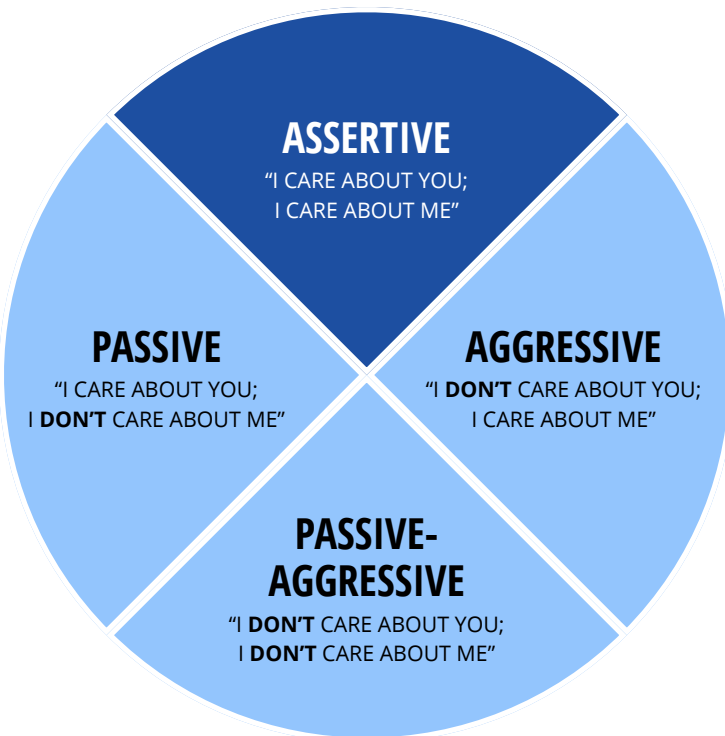


Assertiveness

Interacting with other people can be challenging, especially when difficult feelings get in the way. Anger can lead to aggression that is disrespectful to others, while fear can lead to passivity that causes us to ignore our own needs. Even worse, unvoiced hostility can lead to passive-aggressive behaviour (e.g., smiling to someone's face and then slashing their tires in the carpark).

Assertiveness (Wolpe, 1958) allows you to make different choices when interacting with others. These choices are based on mutual respect and a recognition of everyone's needs. Some specific assertive techniques are below.



Assertiveness is about rights and respect. At any time, you have...

- The right to express **feelings, opinions, values and beliefs**.
- The right to **change your mind**.
- The right to **make decisions**.
- The right to say, "**I don't know**" and/or "**I don't understand**".
- The right to say "**no**" without feeling bad or guilty.
- The right to be **non-assertive**.
- The right to **personal freedom**, to be yourself.
- The right to **privacy**, to be alone and independent.

Fogging

Make the other person feel like they're throwing their insults "into the fog" so they don't land.

"What time do you think this is? You're almost a half an hour late! I'm sick and tired of you always letting me down."

"Yes, I am later than I expected, and I can see this upset you."

"Upset?! Of course, I'm upset! I've been waiting here forever. This is typical of you. You never think of anyone but yourself."

"Yes, I was concerned that you'd be waiting for almost a half an hour."

"Well...why were you late?"

The broken record

Restate a (reasonable) demand over and over until you wear the other person down.

"I bought this coat last week and the lining is ripped. I would like a refund, please."

"This coat looks like you've worn it a lot and it's not meant for that kind of wear."

"I have only had it for a week, and it's already torn. I would like a refund, please."

"You can't expect me to give you your money back after you ripped it."

"The lining is torn after only a week and I would like a refund, please."

Positive inquiry

Deflect a question that makes you uncomfortable by asking a question about it.

"This dinner was fantastic!"

"Thanks! Yes, it was good. What did you like about it in particular?"

Negative inquiry

Deflect a criticism that makes you uncomfortable by asking a question about it.

"That dinner was an abomination!"

"It's true, it wasn't the best. Exactly what didn't you like about it?"