

## Assertive Communication

### Assertiveness Is Simple but Hard

|   | <b>NonAssertive</b><br>(Passive) |   | <b>Assertive</b><br>(Tactful) |   | <b>Aggressive</b><br>(Rude) |
|---|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| ☹ | <b>H</b> onest                   | ✓ | <b>H</b> onest                | ✓ | <b>H</b> onest              |
| ✓ | <b>A</b> ppropriate              | ✓ | <b>A</b> ppropriate           | ☹ | <b>A</b> ppropriate         |
| ✓ | <b>R</b> espectful               | ✓ | <b>R</b> espectful            | ☹ | <b>R</b> espectful          |
| ☹ | <b>D</b> irect                   | ✓ | <b>D</b> irect                | ✓ | <b>D</b> irect              |

Assertiveness involves respecting your rights and the rights of others.

#### Important Facts About Assertiveness

- Use “I” or “me” statements such as “When you do \_\_\_\_\_, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Voice tone, eye contact, and body posture are important parts of assertive communication.
- Use a steady and calm voice, stand or sit up straight, look the other person in the eyes without glaring.
- Feelings are usually only one word (e.g. angry, anxious, happy, sad, hurt, frustrated, joyful)
- Remember, assertiveness doesn’t guarantee that you will get what you want or that the other person will understand your concerns or be happy with what you said. It does improve the chances that the other person will understand what you want or how you feel and thus improve your chances of communicating effectively.

#### Four Essential Steps to Assertive Communication

1. Tell the person what you think about their behavior without accusing them.
2. Tell them how you feel when they behave a certain way.
3. Tell them how their behavior affects you and your relationship with them.
4. Tell them what you would prefer them to do instead.

#### XYZ\* Formula for Effective Communication

The goal of the XYZ\* formula is to express the way you feel (internal world) in response to other’s behavior (external world) in specific situations. You are the only person who has access to your feelings. Others have no access to your internal world. The only way they will know what you are feeling is if you tell them. Similarly, you only have access to other people’s external world. It is very easy to make a mistake when trying to guess what others are feeling or intending.

| I feel <i>X</i>      | when you do <i>Y</i>   | in situation <i>Z</i>           | and I would like *   |
|----------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| I feel angry         | when you leave your socks and underwear on the bedroom floor | after work                      | and I would like you to put them in the hamper.                      |
| I felt insignificant | when you left me with an empty gas tank                      | yesterday                       | and I would like you to leave the car with at least 1/4 tank of gas. |
| I feel angry         | when you don’t call me                                       | if you are staying late at work | and I would like you to call as soon as you know you will be late.   |
| I feel loved         | when you kiss me   | when you get home               | and I would like you to do that everyday.                            |