



Assertiveness

This is one of the main components of the training package. The aim is to teach participants the skills to be assertive with particular emphasis on situations involving negotiations for safer sex. These skills are used on a daily basis in various social circumstances. You use assertiveness in the market, at work, raising your children, and other times.

CONTENTS AND TIME:

1. What is Assertiveness?	30 min.
2. Saying "No"	40 min.
3. Aggression, Passivity, Assertiveness	45 min.
4. The Patient and the Doctors	45 min.
5. Body Language	10 min.
6. Evaluation	10 min.
Total	180 min.

Title

What Is Assertiveness?

Objectives

1. To identify what 'Assertiveness' is and what are its key components.
2. To understand that assertiveness can be acquired through training.

Materials

- Small cards of paper (15 x 10cm)
- Adhesive tape
- 3 large sheets of paper with the words: "knowledge," "attitudes," and "behaviours" written at the top (one word per sheet)
- Hand-out 4A

Time Needed

30 minutes

How To Do It

1. Give each participant several cards and tell them to brainstorm about: "What is assertiveness?" Have them write their ideas on the cards.
2. Read the cards aloud, and record each idea on the large sheets of paper where it belongs (knowledge, attitude, or behaviour).
3. Sum up with a general definition of Assertiveness:



DEFINITION:

- Assertiveness is knowing your own needs, rights, wants and goals and asking for them to be met while acknowledging the needs, rights, wants and goals of the other person.
- Assertiveness training is about acquiring learned skills.
- Assertiveness is a style of communication.

4. Have participants try to identify the key components of assertiveness.

The key components are:

- Knowing what you want and need.
- Being able to say clearly what you want and need.
- Believing you are worthwhile and of value.
- Trying again to take care of your needs.

5. Emphasise:

- Assertiveness skills can be learned.
- Assertiveness enhances self-esteem.
- Assertiveness makes you more comfortable when dealing with any situation.
- Assertiveness simply means that you are taking care of yourself, not that you are being selfish.

6. Finally, talk with the participants about the **“right to be assertive:”**

The right to act in ways that promote your dignity and self-respect as long as others’ rights are not violated in the process.

1. The right to be treated with respect.
2. The right to say no and not feel guilty.
3. The right to experience and express your feelings.
4. The right to take time to slow down and think.
5. The right to change your mind.
6. The right to ask for what you want.
7. The right to do less than you are humanly capable of doing.
8. The right to ask for information.
9. The right to correct mistakes.
10. The right to feel good about yourselves.

*Title***Saying "No"***Objective*

To practise saying "no," and to see that "no" is not a rejection of the person you say it to.

Materials

A list of requests

Time Needed

40 minutes

How To Do It

1. Divide into 2 groups
 - Each group member walks round the group asking each member in turn for something
 - Request the same thing of each person
 - Try and pressure each member to give you what you are asking for.
2. Some examples of requests:
 - Invitation to a memorial service in the countryside
 - Money for food
 - To borrow jewelry for attending a wedding
 - To borrow a new skirt to go to a party
3. Return to the big group. Discuss how people felt:
 - asking/being refused
 - refusing/being pressured

To emphasize:

1. You always have the choice to say "yes" or "no."
2. It is OK to say "no."
3. At first it will seem strange to say "no," but it will get easier.

*Title***Aggression, Passivity, Assertiveness***Objectives*

To identify the characteristics of each category. By understanding each, participants can compare the behaviours, know how to choose suitable behaviour, and be able to understand their own actions better.

Materials

Flip charts, felt tip pens, adhesive tape
Hand-outs 4A and 4B

Time Needed

45 minutes

How To Do It

1. Form 3 groups to brainstorm about each style of behaviour. Have each group think broadly – in terms of how people feel about this style and the results of it (both positive and negative).
2. Give each group a flip chart to write their ideas.
3. Return to big group for group reporting.
4. Sum up the groups' opinions, emphasise the strengths and weaknesses of each kind of behaviour to help the participants to identify and make suitable choices.
5. Give out hand-out 4A and 4B

Hand-out 4A

AGGRESSION IS:

- getting your own way, no matter what
- getting your point across at other people's expense
- getting people to do things they don't want to do
- being loud or violent
- interrupting others
- winning at all costs
- always putting your own needs first

PASSIVITY IS:

- keeping quiet for fear of upsetting people
- avoiding conflict
- saying yes when you want to say no
- always putting other people's needs first
- going along with things you don't like or agree with
- apologising excessively
- inwardly burning with anger and frustration
- being vague about your ideas and what you want
- justifying your actions to other people
- appearing indecisive

ASSERTIVENESS IS:

- being open and honest with yourself and other people
- listening to other people's points of view
- showing understanding of other people's situations
- having self-respect and respect for others
- dealing with your feelings
- dealing with conflict
- being equal
- expressing ideas clearly, but not at the expense of others
- compromising

BY COMMUNICATING ASSERTIVELY:

- your self-confidence increases
- you stand a better chance of getting what you need to take care of yourself
- you are properly understood
- other people know exactly where they are with you
- you are more open to receiving feedback
- your relationships are based on reality rather than illusion
- you feel better for expressing your feelings
- you have fewer situations that are unresolved
- even if you do not resolve a situations, you feel better for having tried

Hand-out 4B

A COMPARISON OF PASSIVE, ASSERTIVE, AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

	PASSIVE	ASSERTIVE	AGGRESSIVE
Characteristics of the behaviour	Does not express wants, ideas, and feelings, or expresses them in self-deprecating way. Intent: to please.	Expresses wants, ideas, and feelings in direct and appropriate ways. Intent: to communicate.	Expresses wants, ideas, and feelings at the expense of others. Intent: to dominate.
Your feelings when you act this way	Anxious, disappointed with yourself. Often angry and resentful later.	Confident, feel good about yourself at the time and later.	Self-righteous, superior. Sometimes embarrassed later.
Other people's feelings about themselves when you act this way	Guilty or superior.	Respected, valued.	Overpowered, hurt.
Other people's feelings about you when you act this way	Irritation, pity, disgust.	Usually respect.	Angry, vengeful.
Outcome	Don't get what you want; anger builds up.	Often get what you want.	Often get what you want at the expense of others. Others feel justified at "getting even".
Payoff	Avoid unpleasant situation, avoid conflict, tension, confrontation.	Feels good; respected by others. Improved self-confidence. Relationships are improved.	Feels superior, powerful, you get what you want.

Title

Role Play the Patients and the Doctors

Objectives

To practice being assertive for your health's sake, to help apply your assertiveness skills to different situations in life.

Materials

Cards describing the 3 doctors' roles and characteristics
Some medical stuff e.g. stethoscopes, jackets, medicines

Time Needed

45 minutes

How To Do It

1. Explain the role play
2. Invite 3 volunteers to play Doctors' roles:
 - a tough doctor
 - a nice doctor who is in a hurry
 - a doctor that does every test and sells medicines but gives no explanations.
3. Give cards of the 3 doctors' roles to 3 volunteers. Only the 3 volunteers will know about the characteristics
4. Invite 3 other volunteers to play characters visiting the doctors and offer them reasons for going to the doctor (or let them decide themselves why they have to visit the doctor).

Role-play each scenario 15 minutes (including getting feedback at the end of the role-play)

5. Help the participants to identify the assertive behaviour in the role-plays. Emphasise the importance of understanding your doctor (and of making him/her explain to you if you do not understand).

Title

Body Language

Objectives

To learn about the messages which are conveyed without words.

Materials

Hand-out 4C

Time Needed

10 minutes

How To Do It

Teach and review the information on Hand-out 4C. This discussion will be brief but encourage the participants to review it on their own later.

Evaluation

Refer back to the objectives and instructions for the Unit Evaluation from the end of Unit 2.

Time Needed

10 minutes

Hand-out 4C

BODY LANGUAGE

Assertive body language adds strength and emphasis to what is being said, and is generally self-assured and calm. It reinforces the verbal message by sending the same message as the verbal message.

Aggressive body language conveys an exaggerated sense of self-importance, strength, and/or an air of superiority. Even when your verbal message is assertive, you will reduce its effectiveness if your body language is conveying an aggressive message. An example of this, when a person slams a book down on the table as they tell you, "I am not angry with you."

Passive body language conveys weakness, anxiety, and lack of self-confidence. It softens the impact of what is being said to the point that the verbal message loses most of its power. This is particularly true when the person's verbal message and body language are in conflict with each other, for example, laughing when saying, "I'm really angry with you."

In general when there is such a discrepancy between a verbal message and a body language message, other people seem to take the body language message more seriously.

EYE CONTACT		
ASSERTIVE	AGGRESSIVE	PASSIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · comfortably direct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · staring intensely · staring off into distance with bored expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · looking away or down · blinking rapidly.
FACIAL EXPRESSIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · open, frank, relaxed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · clenching teeth · flaring nostrils · jutting jaws · pursed, tightlipped mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · constant smiling · smiling, laughing, or winking when expressing irritation · biting or wetting lips · swallowing or clearing throat · tensing and wrinkling forehead
VOICE and SPEECH EXPRESSIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · appropriately firm · appropriately warm · expressive, emphasizing key words · clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · overly rapid · deadly quiet · overly loud or strident · sarcastic or condescending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · overly soft · mumbled · whiny · monotone · overly slow
GESTURES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · well-balanced · erect · relaxed · hand gestures, emphasizing key words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · pounding fists · stiff and rigid · finger waving or pointing · shaking head as if other person isn't to be believed · hands on hips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · covering mouth or lower face with hand · excessive head nodding · tinkering with clothing or jewellery · constant shifting of weight · scratching or rubbing head or other parts of body · wringing or rubbing hands · wooden body posture