

Week 7

Interpersonal Skills 1008PSY

- Assertion exists within a continuum



	Submission	Assertion	Aggression
Rights of oneself	Violated	Respected	Disproportionately valued
Thoughts, feelings & beliefs	Not expressed, indirectly expressed, or expressed in apologetic, self-effacing manner	Expressed honestly, directly & appropriately	Inappropriate, forcefully expressed, dishonest
Rights of others	Disproportionately over-valued	Respected	Violated

< Definitions

Assertive	Aggressive	Submissive
May achieve desired goal	Achieves goals regardless of others	Does not achieve goals
Positive self-concept	Devalues others	Often feels hurt or anxious
Makes decisions for self	Makes decisions for others	Allows others to make decisions
Is expressive	Is expressive	Is inhibited
Feels comfortable with & equal to others	Feels uncomfortable with & superior to others	Feels uncomfortable with & less worthy than others
Can present own point of view & can accept alternative point of view	Can present own point of view & may try to impose it on others	Unable to present a point of view

< Characteristics

- The Interpersonal Dynamic



Passive Aggressive Behaviour

- Indirect expression of aggression
- Temporary compliance, but behavioural delay.
- Intentional inefficiency – compliance, but in a sub-standard manner
- Allowing a problem to escalate –using inaction to allow a foreseeable problem to emerge
- Hidden, but conscious revenge – sabotage
- Self-depreciation – self-sabotage to hurt another
- Initially Win/Lose, but eventually Lose/Lose
- Chronic lateness/forgetting
- Sulking/withdrawing
- Making excuses
- Mixed messages
- Blame – always someone/thing else’s fault
- what it sounds like...
 - “I thought you knew”
 - “I was only joking”
 - “Fine. Whatever”
 - “You’ve done so well for someone with your education level”
 - “Why are you getting so upset?”

Managing Passive Aggressive Behaviour

- Difficult to address, as is covert, always a “reasonable” excuse
- Look for patterns, document specific instances
- Have assertive conversation with the person
- Revise expectations

Universal Declaration of human rights

- Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Personal Rights

- To ask for what you want.
- To say no to requests or demands you can't meet.
- To express your feelings, positive or negative.
- To change your mind.
- To make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
- To determine your own priorities.
- To not be responsible for others' behavior, actions, feelings, or problems.
- To expect honesty from others.
- To be angry at someone you love.
- To not give reasons for your behavior.
- To make decisions based on your feelings.
- To your own needs for personal time.
- To be healthier than those around you.
- To be in a non abusive environment.
- To make friends and be comfortable around people.

Types of assertion

- Mutual
 - Balance of personal rights & responsibilities
 - Self-expression plus maintaining relationship
 - Me AND you

- Unilateral
 - Places more emphasis on the “getting what you want” aspect & the expense of relationship maintenance
 - Me VERSUS you
 - RISK of negative perceptions by others – particularly for females

Goals of Mutual Assertion

- Task Effectiveness
 - Achieve a goal or outcome
- Relationship Effectiveness
 - Achieve outcome in a way that maintains the relationship
- Self-respect Effectiveness
 - Achieve outcome in a way that maintains the relationship, & in a way that facilitates self-respect

Assertiveness in Women: Sex-Role Stereotypes

Feminine – Communal (other-oriented)	Masculine – Agentic (self-oriented)
Warmth + expressiveness	Competency, strength, dominance
Concerned with welfare of others	Assertive
Caring	Controlling
Nurturing	Aggressive
Emotional	Dominant
Empathic	Forceful
Supportive	Independent
Selfless	Self-confident

Gender Differences: Assertiveness and Leadership

- Female – more participative, democratic, collaborative, less hierarchical
- Male – more autocratic, directive
- Effectiveness
 - Small tendency for women to be devalued as leaders compared to men
 - Strong tendency to selectively devalue female leaders when:
 - Men are doing the evaluating
 - In male-dominated organisations
 - When women are displaying more traditionally masculine leadership behaviours

Being Assertive 'I' Messages

- For positive & negative feelings
- **2-part: Feelings + Behaviour**
 - *I felt upset when you didn't show up for our LG meeting*
- **3-part: Feelings + Behaviour + Effects**
 - *I felt upset when you didn't show up for our LG meeting. It meant that we couldn't rehearse the role-play properly*
- **4-part: Feelings + Behaviour + Effects + Alternative Acceptable Behaviour**
 - *I felt upset when you didn't show up for our LG meeting. It meant that we couldn't rehearse the role-play properly. If you can't come in future, please let me know so that we can make other plans*
- No blame or interpretation of the other person's behaviour
- Do not say “you make me feel...” – this blames the other person for your feelings
- Do not apologise for being appropriately assertive, or minimise your feelings

Myths about assertion

- It will get you what you want
 - I have to be assertive in every situation
 - I shouldn't feel anxious or uncomfortable
 - Other people should understand how I feel – I shouldn't have to be assertive
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What gets in the way

- Self-defeating beliefs
 - Its rude or selfish to say what you want
 - People won't like me/it will damage the friendship
 - Skills deficit
 - Anxiety & stress
 - Situation evaluation – don't know which skills to apply
 - Mistake non-assertion for politeness or being helpful
 - Cultural & generational influences
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Assertiveness: To Be or Not to Be?

Be	Not to be
When the issue/conflict is very important to you	When you know you are in the wrong
If you will lose self-respect if you don't	When the emotional hurt will offset any benefit
When the relationship is important	When the relationship is important
When the other person can handle it	When you are in a physically threatening situation
When the other person is co-operative	A physically threatening situation for others, & you consider intervening on their behalf
When a win/win solution is possible	When the issue is more important to the other person than it is to you

Choose your behaviour

Consider:

- Situation/goal
- Costs/benefits
- Rights/needs
- Emotions
- Nonverbal
- Verbal messages

Consequences of aggressive, assertive, or passive messages (long & short term)

Escalating Assertion

- Listen mindfully to other party
 - Reflect
 - Reassert...be specific & concrete
 - Avoid blame or demands
 - Do not become defensive if other party 'attacks' you
 - Do not become sidetracked with other issues
 - Listen, reflect
 - Reassert with strengthened message
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References

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