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## Assertiveness & You

### What is Assertiveness?

Assertiveness is being able to stand up for yourself, expressing your opinions and feelings while listening to what other people have to say without having to agree with them or let them have their own way. It is not the same as being aggressive, nor is assertiveness about having power over other people, or always getting your own way. You can be assertive without being forceful or rude. Assertiveness means accepting every other human being on earth as having the same rights and responsibilities as ourselves.

Being assertive is a skill that can be learnt. It is a way of communicating and behaving with others that helps the person to become more confident and aware of themselves and their own needs as an individual, rather than as a partner, friend, mother or father, etc.

Often in life we deal with situations by losing our temper, by saying nothing or by giving in. This may leave us feeling unhappy, angry, or out of control and still may not actually solve the problem. This may become even more of a problem if we are struggling with low mood or anxiety. These problems cause a loss of confidence and self-worth that make us more likely to give in to everyone around us. Sometimes the reverse happens and we dig our heels in and become very irritable towards everyone else. We may have learned to react passively or aggressively in life, perhaps because of the way we saw other people dealing with situations as we grew up. The good news is that, whatever has happened in the past, we can learn to be more assertive in the present by using assertiveness skills. Your guide will help you to understand about being assertive, whether or not you are assertive at present and what you can do to change.



### Key Elements of Assertiveness

1. Assertiveness — is expressing your own feelings, needs, rights and opinions while maintaining respect for other people and their feelings, needs, rights and opinions. Assertiveness is not about having power over or controlling other people, or about winning or losing – it is about self-control and respect for self and others.
2. Feelings — When you are being assertive, you are able to express your feelings in a direct, honest and appropriate way.
3. Needs — You have needs that have to be met otherwise you may feel undervalued, rejected, angry or sad.
4. Rights — We all have basic human rights and it is possible to stand up for your own rights in such a way that does not violate another person's rights.
5. Opinions — We are all entitled to have and to express our opinions, but that doesn't make your opinions facts or the truth, any more than anyone else's opinions.