

Assertiveness & You

Can you be assertive when you need to?

What is assertiveness?

Assertiveness is the art of clear and honest communication. An assertive person can express their own feelings, needs and opinions in a calm and reasonable way.

Isn't that just like being aggressive?

No – assertiveness isn't about getting your own way all the time, or making other people do what you want them to. You can be assertive without being forceful or rude.

I always end up giving in to others or saying nothing because it seems easier. It can seem easier but it can leave you feeling angry, unhappy and with low self-esteem. And it won't solve the problem so the situation will crop up again.

Will being assertive help me?

Yes – it will help you stand up for your rights whilst also recognising that other people have rights and needs of their own. Assertiveness isn't about winners and losers – it's about compromise and respect for yourself and others.

Isn't it too late to change the way I behave?

No – it's never too late. Anyone can learn to be more assertive. Your guide will help you to pick out situations where it would help you to be more assertive, and show you how to start making changes.

Example

Your neighbours have their TV on late at night in their bedroom. They have the volume very high and it keeps you awake. You are getting more and more upset but haven't said anything.

What do you do?

1. Lose your temper and go round and shout at them...
2. Do nothing and suffer the effects of lack of sleep...
3. Get your revenge by playing loud music...
4. Go round at a time when you are feeling calm and ask them not to have the volume so loud late at night because it is keeping you awake.

Which of these responses is most likely to solve the problem?

Talk through this leaflet with your guide to find out if you could be more assertive and how you could practice being assertive in different situations.

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