

Assertive Communication

Assertiveness is a key component of good communication. Learning how to clearly articulate what you want while still respecting the needs and priorities of others will help you build good relationships in both your personal and professional life. These tips may help improve your ability to communicate assertively:

- ▶ **Focus on your strengths.** Emphasize the positive when talking about your goals and hopes for the future. Instead of dwelling on negative thoughts or worrying about what you can't do, focus on what you can accomplish.
- ▶ **Be honest and direct.** Let people know what you need in order to achieve goals and meet expectations. Addressing your own needs up front will help you avoid irritation, frustration, or resentment later down the line.
- ▶ **Use "I" statements.** This technique will help you clearly articulate your wants and needs. To create an "I" statement:

- Express what you feel, think, or need using a statement that starts with "I," such as "I am worried that..." or "I want to..."
- Describe the concern you want to address or goal you want to achieve.
- Explain why you want to reach this outcome.

▶ **Address conflict.** Dealing with conflict in a respectful manner will strengthen your work and personal relationships and improve your ability to solve problems. When a conflict arises:

- Be flexible. Avoid an "all or nothing" mentality.
- Emphasize points of agreement. Use them as a foundation for discussing those areas where you and the other party differ.
- Avoid personal attacks. Stick to the issue at hand.
- Seek solutions instead of trying to determine who is to blame.

▶ **Contact LifeMatters.** If you struggle with assertive communication, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.



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