

What can I do if I am struggling with assertiveness skills?



See a personal counsellor

A personal counsellor can help develop the assertiveness skills which can help you feel better about yourself.

See a doctor

Sometimes a lack of assertiveness is just one part of a bigger problem. A lack of assertiveness and low self-esteem can be characteristics of depression. If you feel your problems extend beyond asserting yourself, it may benefit you to see a doctor or counsellor.

Appointments can be made at Health & Counselling Services (HCS) by calling 613-520-6674 or by dropping by HCS located at 2600 CTTC Building.

All appointments are confidential

CU Healthy

HCS wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Helpers
- Website (carleton.ca/health)
- Workshops

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or carletonwellness@gmail.com.



2600 CTTC Building

613-520-6674

carleton.ca/health

Assertiveness



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Introduction

For some people it can be a real challenge to speak their mind. This is part of being assertive. On the other hand, some people always make their thoughts heard, and sometimes in a very brash manner. Being assertive does not mean being overly aggressive or threatening. It simply means being able to express yourself (your feelings, your needs, your desires) to others in an unambiguous way, so as to uphold your personal comfort and safety.

Lacking assertiveness causes problems in many interpersonal relationships - with family, friends, peers, and co-workers. Respecting the rights of others is important, but you are entitled to be treated with respect as well.

What are some signs that I lack assertiveness?

- ◆ Do you find others coerce you into thinking or doing what they want you to do?
- ◆ Do you find it difficult to express yourself openly and honestly?
- ◆ Do you feel you can't say no, or that you feel guilty if you do?
- ◆ Do you find you are either hesitant to disagree or hostile if you do?



What type of communicator am I?



Non-assertive Communicators

- ◆ Put others first, even when this causes problems for themselves.
- ◆ Are afraid of being disliked if they disagree with others (and have difficulty saying 'no')

Assertive Communicators

- ◆ Express how they feel and make their voice heard confidently but without violating the rights of others.
- ◆ Are not pushed into doing things they don't want to and express their feelings when they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

Aggressive Communicators

- ◆ Readily express feelings and opinions but do so in a manner which infringes on the rights of others (i.e. a manner that is insulting, derogatory, etc.).
- ◆ Don't care what others think, and coerce others into doing what they want.

How do I become more assertive?

- ◆ Remember that your feelings and ideas are important and worthy of being heard.
- ◆ Don't automatically believe somebody else is right; ask yourself if what you're being told makes sense.
- ◆ Don't mindlessly nod in agreement; respond actively.
- ◆ Make a decision about what you want before speaking your mind. If you're unsure of exactly what you'd like, don't be afraid to say you'd like some time before making a decision.
- ◆ Be specific. Don't speak vaguely and expect people to pinpoint what you are trying to say. Repeat what you have said or rephrase your words if you feel that someone isn't getting the message.
- ◆ Keep your body upright and maintain eye contact when you speak.
- ◆ If somebody does something you dislike, describe the behaviour and how you feel about it.
- ◆ If you are refusing something, remain firm and give a brief reasoning.
- ◆ If you are frustrated, try to explain how you feel as opposed to becoming offensive. Do not threaten or manipulate others into doing what you want.
- ◆ Learn to realize you have strengths and weaknesses: accept your strengths, and work to gradually overcome weaknesses.

