

Conflict Resolution in Schools

Guide for Educators in South Africa

Booklet 9

ASSERTIVENESS

Topics in this booklet:

- Your rights
- Assertiveness Techniques
- Assertive Communication
- Aggressive or Assertive?
- Passive-Aggressive Behaviour



Conflict Resolution for Schools

Guide for Educators in South Africa

Booklet 9 - Assertiveness

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Learner Worksheet

Not applicable

If you were behaving assertively, you would:

Feel:

- Calm;
- Respected;
- Strong and in control.

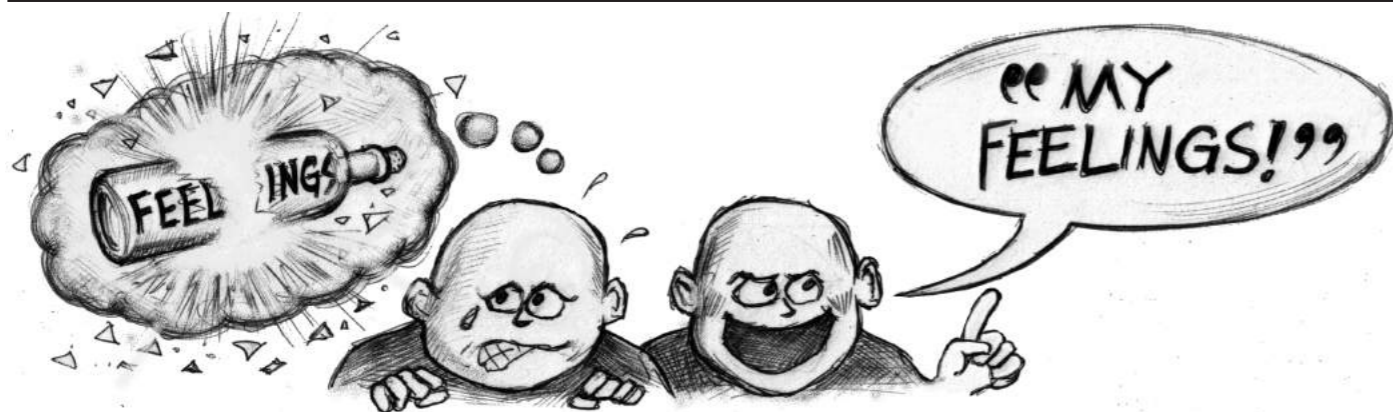
Look:

- Confident;
- Calm;
- Strong.

Say:

- When you...;
- I feel...;
- And what I would like is... ('I' statements).

Notes



- Joe asks Sam if he can borrow his new bicycle. Sam does not want to part with it and is frightened that Joe would break it or lose it if he took it (as he has not been very reliable in the past).
- Marius makes fun of Tom because he hasn't seen the latest movie.
- Joshua tells Samuel to get out of his seat in the school bus because he wants to sit there.
- Elizabeth tells Sarie that her clothes are old-fashioned and ugly, and that she will call the 'fashion police'!
- Thabo asks Martin to give him some of his lunch. Martin has only just started eating his lunch, and is still hungry. Thabo ate his own lunch earlier in the morning.

Then, draw the Y Chart (see 'Issues to Explore') on the blackboard, leaving out the words under the bold headings: Feel, Look and Say. Ask the learners to determine, if they were being assertive, how or what would they:

- Feel;
- Look;
- Say.

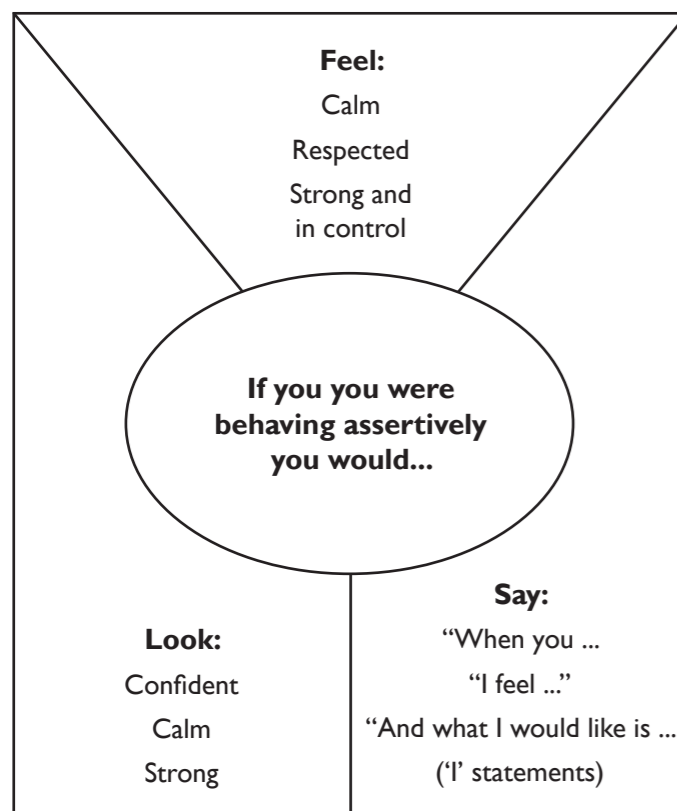
Then fill in the rest of the "Y" Chart. Discuss any issues that arise.

Ask the learners to determine - if they were behaving assertively by feeling assertive, looking assertive and saying assertive words - how would they deal with any conflicts in their lives?

Discuss the 'win-win' approach of assertiveness.

Then, continue the discussion. See below for 'Issues to Explore' in the discussion.

The Y Chart



Issues to Explore

See the background information on Anger & Emotions.

Assertiveness

Being assertive is being confident, positive, strong-willed and insistent.

It takes a positive frame of mind and the determination to stay with a certain course. This means you will need to decide on your course of action and then to stick to it.

It is best to begin to use assertiveness when dealing with something really important. Then, building the determination not to give in is easier. Once you get into the habit of being assertive, it becomes more natural and simpler.

There are some tips on being assertive below:

- Decide on the things you really want – and then be assertive in achieving these;
- Do not waiver – once you decide to be assertive, see it through;
- Make it clear that this matter is non-negotiable (this may need to be repeated for the message to get through);
- Make sure that your body language, voice and speech all match your assertive stance.

Assertive Communication

Here are some communication techniques that can help you convey a positive assertive attitude:

- Use suitable facial expressions, always maintaining good eye contact;
- Keep your voice firm but pleasant;
- Pay careful attention to your posture and gestures;
- Listen carefully and let people know you have heard what they said;
- Ask questions for clarification;
- Reply appropriately;
- Be sincere and truthful;
- Make your message positive and strong;
- Use 'I' statements;
- Look for a 'win-win' approach to problem solving.

Things to remember when making an 'I' statement:

- Do not blame or shame the other person (they may fight back);
- Try to avoid the accusing 'you' (they may start trying to defend themselves while you are speaking);
- Use clean, clear language (so that they will understand and keep listening);
- Make sentences short and to the point (so they don't get bored).

Assertiveness

Background

Assertiveness is expressing your thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a direct, honest and appropriate way. It means having respect for both yourself and others. In conflict resolution it is part of consciously working toward 'win-win' solutions. A 'win-win' solution ensures that both parties end up with their needs met to the highest degree possible. An assertive person effectively influences, listens and negotiates. By doing so, he or she generates willing co-operation from others.

Assertiveness is not aggressiveness. Aggressiveness involves expressing thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a way that is inappropriate and violates the rights of others. When we act aggressively, we put our wants, needs, and rights above those of others. We attempt to get our way by not allowing others a choice. Whereas assertiveness is part of finding a 'win-win' solution, aggressiveness attempts to obtain a 'win-lose' solution.

Assertiveness is thus about expressing yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others. It is appropriately direct, open and honest communication which enables you to express and enhance yourself. Acting assertively will allow you to feel self-confident and will generally gain a respectful reaction from others. It can improve relationships and help you to feel better about yourself and your self-control in everyday situations. In turn, this will improve your ability to communicate and thus your chances of obtaining what you really want from life. In essence, assertiveness means the ability to express your thoughts and feelings in a way that clearly states your needs while keeping the lines of communication open with others.

In order to express your rights, you have to believe in fundamental individual rights. If you do not, then you are

likely to react passively to events and circumstances and let the needs, opinions, and judgments of others override your own. If you do this, you end up feeling hurt, resentful, anxious, and sometimes angry.

The following are some of your rights:

- The right to decide how to lead your life. This includes pursuing your own goals and dreams and establishing your own priorities.
- The right to hold your own values, beliefs, opinions, and emotions - and the right to respect yourself for them, no matter the opinion of others.
- The right to tell others how you wish to be treated.
- The right to express yourself and to say 'No', 'I don't know' or 'I don't understand'. You have the right to take the time you need to formulate your ideas before expressing them.
- The right to ask for information or help - without having negative feelings about your need to do so.
- The right to change your mind and to make mistakes - with full understanding and acceptance of the consequences.
- The right to like yourself even though you are not perfect.
- The right to have positive, satisfying relationships within which you feel comfortable and free to express yourself honestly - and the right to change or end relationships if they don't meet your needs.
- The right to change, enhance, or develop your life in any way you determine.

Many people feel that attending to their legitimate needs and asserting their rights is being selfish. This is not necessarily true. Selfishness means being concerned about only your rights, with little or no regard for others.



Implicit in assertiveness about your rights is the fact that you are concerned about the legitimate rights of others as well. When you behave selfishly – thinking only about your own rights with no regard for the rights of others – then you are behaving aggressively, not assertively.

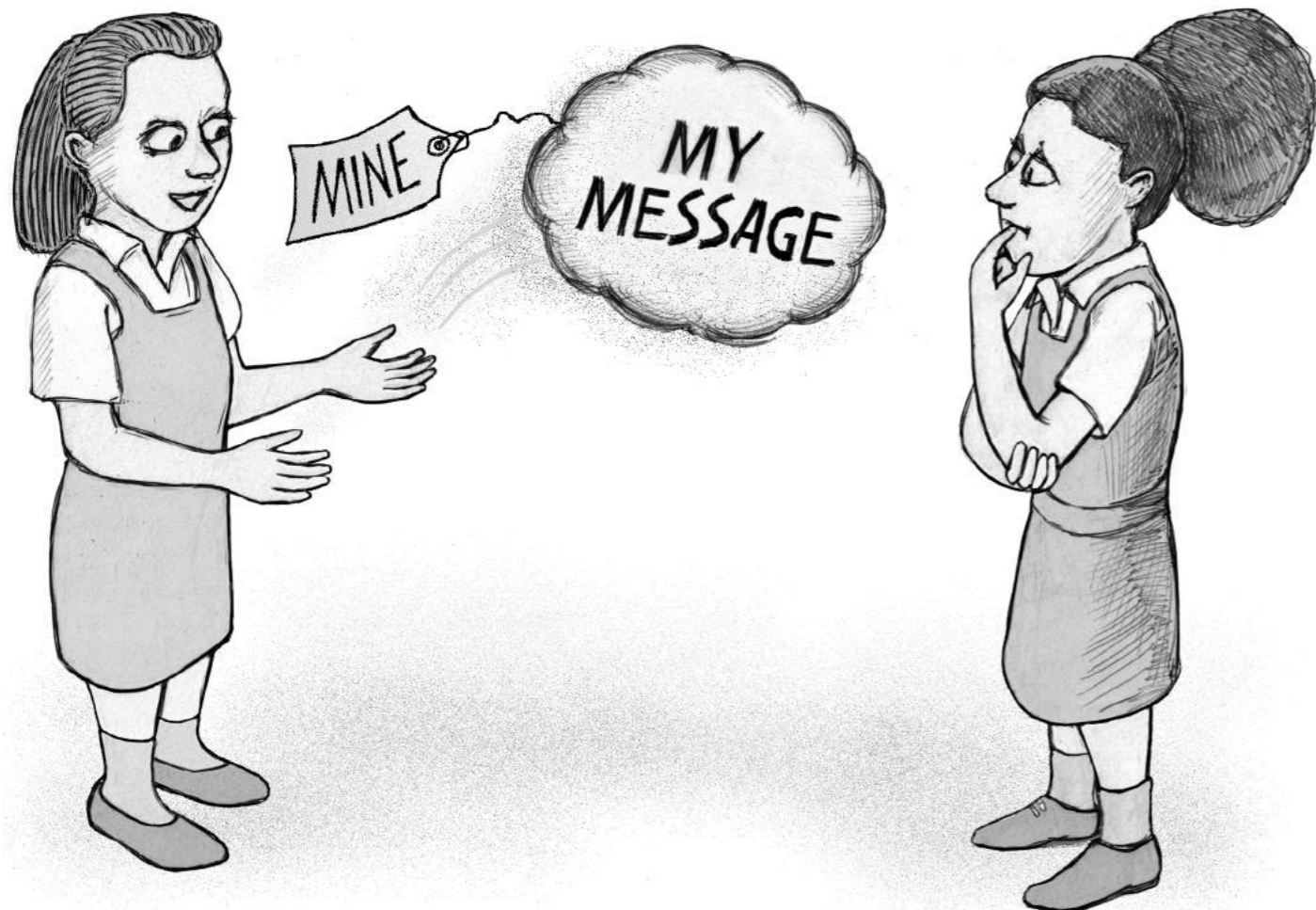
Lack of assertiveness is one of the reasons why conflicts occur in relationships. It means your needs, beliefs and values are not clearly expressed, and so will not be respected.

Assertiveness Techniques

1. Be as specific and clear as possible about what you want, think and feel. Try using the following formulas and statements:

- 'I want to...';
- 'I don't want you to...';
- 'Would you...?';
- 'I appreciated it when you did that';
- 'I have a different opinion, I think that...';
- 'I have mixed reactions. I agree with these aspects for these reasons, but I am disturbed about these other aspects for these reasons.'

2. Be direct. Deliver your message to the person for whom it is intended. If you want to tell Joe something, tell Joe, do not tell everyone except Joe; i.e. do not tell a group, of which Joe just happens to be a member.



- 3. 'Own' your message.** Acknowledge that your message comes from your frame of reference and reflects your values. You can acknowledge ownership with personalised ('I') statements such as 'I do not agree with you' (as compared to the impersonal, e.g. 'you are wrong') or 'I'd like you to mow the lawn' (as compared to 'You really should mow the lawn, you know').
- 4. Do not blame** or shame the other person. Suggesting that someone is wrong or bad is likely to foster resentment and resistance, rather than understanding and cooperation.
- 5. Ask for feedback.** 'Am I being clear?', 'How do you see this situation?', 'What do you want to do?' As well as clearing up any misunderstandings, asking for feedback can help others realise that you are expressing an opinion, feeling, or desire rather than a demand.

Assertive Communication

Effective assertive communication includes the following three elements:

- **Behaviour** - what it is, exactly, that the other person has done or is doing;
- **Effect** - what is happening because of their behaviour;
- **Feelings** - how does their behaviour make you feel?

Any communication formulated in this way will be clear and unambiguous. An example would be: 'When you collect me

Assertiveness

Objectives

- To help learners to understand the difference between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour;
- To help learners understand and practice assertive behaviour.

Age/level

Ages 9 to 14 years

Duration

A lesson or part lesson

Materials

Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen

Procedure

First, begin by reminding learners of the definition of an assertive person:

A person who behaves assertively is someone who thinks that both their and other people's needs matter, and tries to find a way to meet both.

Assertiveness is expressing your thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a direct, honest, and appropriate way. It means having respect both for yourself and for others. In the case of conflict, it is consciously working toward a 'win-win' solution.

Draw out and explain some of the facts from the background on assertiveness. Run through assertiveness techniques and the main points of assertive communication. See also the information below under 'Issues to Explore'.

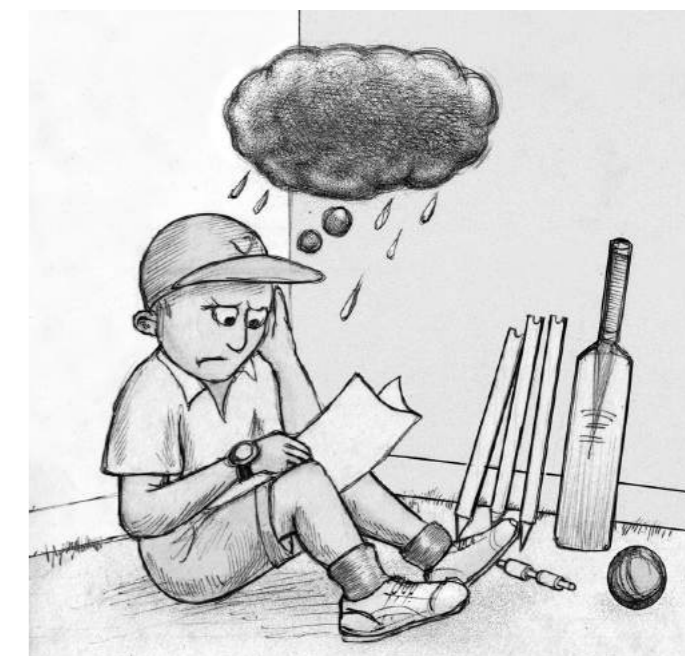
Stress the importance of 'I' statements. To make effective 'I' statements, use the following formulation:

- When ... (say what happened in a factual, neutral way which doesn't assign blame);
- I feel ... (say how you feel);
- And what I would like to happen is ... (say what you would like the outcome to be).

Practice this with the class, using a couple of examples. Two suggestions are below:

1. Your brother keeps borrowing your toys and then losing them

[Example: 'When my toys are borrowed and not returned, I feel it is unfair that I should bear the loss through no fault of my own. Therefore, I have decided that should I lend you any of my toys again in the future, I will ask for another toy as security. Then, if my toy is not returned, I will keep the toy that you pledged as security'.]



2. Your friend keeps on arranging to meet you and then never turns up

[Example: 'When we arrange to meet and then you don't turn up I waste a lot of time standing around waiting. I also feel really let down. In the future, when we meet up I would like to meet you at my house, so at least I can be doing other things when I am waiting for you'.]

See also the tips for making 'I' statements in 'Issues to Explore'.

Remind the learners of the difference between assertive, passive and aggressive behaviour (see previous lessons).

Now try the following role plays with the class. Ask for two learner volunteers to act out each one in front of the class.

Take the first example:

- Andrea borrows Janine's pencil case. She returns the pencil case, but tells Janine that she has lost a valuable pen that was in the case.

Ask the class to compose an assertive 'I' statement for Janine to say to Andrea. Ask some learners for their suggestions and write them on the board. Choose the best one (short, factual and precise, not blaming or accusing, having ownership, personal feelings and what they want to happen) and ask the two learners to act it out – one playing Janine and one Andrea.

Then ask the two learners to act it out again - first with an aggressive response and then with a passive response.

Ask the learners role playing how they felt after each role play.

Also ask 'Janine' whether she got what she wanted?

Do the same for the other role plays below, choosing different pairs of learners for each situation. Get them to act as well as to say the lines.

• **Do you know anybody who acts assertively?**

Here, you can ask learners whether the person acting assertively is popular.

Everybody knows exactly where they stand with an assertive person.

They take care to ensure that everyone's needs and interests are taken into account.

• **Do you ever act this way?**

If any learners respond positively, ask them how it feels to be assertive.

Did it help them to achieve what they wanted or needed?

Did it help them to get on well with others?

• **What are the benefits of assertive behaviour?**

Assertive behaviour is the most effective way of achieving your own needs and interests.

It does this without detrimentally affecting the needs and interests of others.

It allows a person to be open about their needs, interests and feelings. This ensures that others know they are honest and straightforward and they do not have to bottle up their feelings.

• **Why are we trying to understand assertive behaviour?**

So we can behave in this open and effective way.

Learner Worksheet

Understanding Assertive Behaviour

Definition:

A person who behaves assertively is someone who thinks that both his/her needs and other people's needs matter, and tries to find a way to meet the needs of both parties.

Their attitude is:

- We can both win;
- We both matter;
- Both of our feelings matter;
- We're both OK;
- We both have our own strengths.

Questions:

- What does an assertive person do?
- What does an assertive person say?
- If people behave assertively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?
- If two people both behave assertively, will they get along well together?
- Would you appreciate it if someone behaved assertively towards you?
- Do you think that behaving assertively is the best way to implement the Golden Rule ("do as you would be done by")?

from school late (behaviour) I feel angry and disappointed (feelings) because it appears that you do not think I am important enough to make the effort to be on time and all my friends think you don't care about me (effect).

Choose assertive words carefully:

Use factual descriptions instead of judgements

Compare the following:

'This is sloppy work.' (Aggressive)

'There are three crossings out on this page, that is three too many.' (Assertive)

Avoid exaggerations

Compare the following:

'You are never on time!' (Aggressive)

'You were 15 minutes late today. That's the third time this week.' (Assertive)

Use 'I', not 'You'

Compare the following:

'You always interrupt my stories!' (Aggressive)

'I would like to tell my story without being interrupted.' (Assertive)

Express thoughts, feelings, and opinions reflecting ownership

Compare the following:

'He makes me angry.' (Denies ownership of feelings)

'I get angry when he breaks his promises.' (Assertive and takes ownership of feelings)

Sentences should be clear and to the point. Make your point clearly and positively, without inflaming or annoying the other person.

Here are some communication techniques that can help you convey a positive assertive attitude:

- Use suitable facial expressions, always maintaining good eye contact.
- Keep your voice firm but pleasant.
- Pay careful attention to your posture and gestures.
- Listen carefully and let people know you have heard what they said.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Look for a 'win-win' approach to problem solving.

How you communicate non-verbally – with voice tone, gestures, eye contact, facial expression and posture – will influence your impact on others.



Further Resources

Websites

Assertiveness training

http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=9778&cn=353

Better Health Channel

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bharticles.nsf/pages/Assertiveness?open>

University at Buffalo

<http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/assertiveness.shtm>

Publications

Title: Managing Conflict With Confidence (Primary and Secondary, Australia)
 Authors: By Clare Heaton & Maureen Lynch
 Publisher: Pearson Longman, 2003
 ISBN 01-74091-059-1



Aggressive Behaviour

Objectives

To help learners to:

- Recognise aggressive behaviour;
- Understand that aggressive behaviour is not acceptable.

Age/level

Ages 9 to 14 years

Duration

Part of a lesson

Materials

Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen.

Procedure

Write the following on the board and read it with the learners.

Definition:

A person who behaves aggressively is someone who thinks that their needs are more important than those of others and will try to meet their needs regardless of the needs of others.

Their attitude is:

- I'm right. You're wrong;
- I win. You lose;
- I matter. You don't matter;
- My feelings matter. Your feelings don't matter;
- I'm OK. You're not OK;
- I'm strong. You're weak.



Now organise the class into groups of five or six learners. Give each group a copy of the learner worksheet 'Understanding Aggressive Behaviour' (see below). Ask each group to select someone to write out their answers and someone to present their findings to the class. Then, give them about five minutes or so to discuss and complete the questions on the worksheet.

When they have finished, or after sufficient time has passed, ask each group in turn to present their findings to the class.

Then, continue the discussion. See below for 'Issues to Explore' in the discussion.

Issues to Explore

See the background information on Anger & Emotions:

• **What does an aggressive person do?**

Tries to take advantage of other people, for example:

- Takes or steals things;
- Cheats;
- Uses force or violence;
- Uses threats;
- Imposes their will on others (in order to get their own way).

The learners may come up with more examples.

• **What does an aggressive person say?**

All sorts of cruel things, including threats and demands, for example:

- Give me your cell phone;
- Give me your money;
- Give me your lunch;
- If you don't do this for me, I'll hit you.

The learners may come up with more examples.

• **If people behave aggressively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?**

No, the outcome will very probably be a 'win-lose' situation. This is because the aggressive person wants to make sure that all his or her interests and needs are met. They do not care about the other person and their feelings.

Other questions that could be explored in discussion include:

• **Do you know anybody who acts aggressively?**

Here, you can ask learners whether the person acting aggressively is popular.

Do they have many friends? Why not?

Assertive Behaviour

Objectives

To help learners to understand:

- Assertive behaviour;
- The benefits of behaving assertively.

Age/level

Ages 9 to 14 years

Duration

Part of a lesson

Materials

Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen

Procedure

Write the definition on the board and read it with the learners.

Definition:

A person who behaves assertively is someone who thinks that both their needs and other people's needs matter, and tries to find a way to meet both their needs.

Their attitude is:

- We can both win;
- We both matter;
- Both of our feelings matter;
- We're both OK;
- We both have our own strengths.

Next, organise the class into groups of five or six learners. Give each group a copy of the learner worksheet 'Understanding Assertive Behaviour'. Ask each group to select someone to write out their answers and someone to present their findings to the class. Then, give them about five minutes or so to discuss and complete the questions on the worksheet.

When they have finished, or after sufficient time has passed, ask each group in turn to present their findings to the class.

Then, continue the discussion. See below for 'Issues to Explore' in the discussion.

Issues to Explore

See the background information on Anger & Emotions:

• **What does an assertive person do?**

- They state what their needs and interests are;
- They say what they want to achieve;



- They express how they feel;
- They look after the interests and feelings of others;
- They admit when they make mistakes.

The learners may come up with more examples.

• **What does an assertive person say?**

- 'My point of view is ...';
- 'I would like to achieve ...';
- 'My feeling is that ...';
- 'I appreciated it when you did ...';
- 'I think we should do ...';
- 'We need more information before we do ...';
- 'I was wrong when I said ...'.

The learners may come up with more examples.

• **If people behave assertively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?**

Yes, there is likely to be a 'win-win' outcome, because the assertive person tries to meet the needs and interests of both parties.

Other questions that could be explored in discussion include:

Issues to Explore

See the background information on Anger & Emotions:

- **What does a passive-aggressive person do?**
They try underhanded and manipulative ways of getting what they want. (See the behaviours above)
The learners may come up with more examples.
- **What does a passive-aggressive person say?**
 - 'It wasn't me, it was...';
 - 'I couldn't do the homework because ... stole my workbook';
 - '... copied my exam';
 - 'You really are the coolest, strongest boy in the class – please be my friend';
 - 'Anyway, Sue only did so well in the exam because she doesn't ever take her nose out of her books'.

The learners may come up with more examples.
- **If people behave passive-aggressively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?**
No, there is likely to be a 'lose-win' outcome, because the passive-aggressive person will not speak up for his or her own needs and interests but instead try, for example, to blame others.

Other questions that could be explored in discussion include:

- **Do you know anybody who acts in a passive-aggressive manner?**
Here, you can ask learners whether the person acting passive-aggressively is popular.



Are they considered to be a 'wimp'?
Are they considered dishonest or manipulative?

- **Do you ever act this way?**
If any learners respond positively, ask them why.
Did they realise that they were behaving like this previously?
Now what do they think of this behaviour?
Why do they not just act assertively to obtain what they want?
- **Why is passive aggressive-behaviour not desirable?**
Because the passive-aggressive person does not speak up assertively for their own needs and interests. Instead, they are always manipulating and playing games to try and gain what they want. This can come across as being deceitful and false.
The passive-aggressive person is often resentful and angry – sometimes they were previously passive, but the build up of anger has made them become passive-aggressive.
- **Why are we trying to understand passive-aggressive behaviour?**
So we can avoid behaving in this way.
So we can recognise this behaviour in other people and not take advantage of them, but encourage them to overcome it by adopting straightforward and effective assertive behaviour.
Refer to the lesson on 'Assertiveness'.

Learner Worksheet

Understanding Passive-Aggressive Behaviour

Definition:
Passive-aggressive people want to get their needs met, but are not prepared to be assertive about their real feelings. They often manipulate people to do things for them, but may be unaware of the games they play with others.

- What does a passive-aggressive person do?
- What does a passive-aggressive person say?
- If people behave passive-aggressively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?
- How do you think a passive-aggressive person would react if confronted by someone acting assertively (i.e. Who refused to play along)?
- Do you think passive-aggressive people get along well with other passive-aggressive people? If yes/no, why?
- Do you think passive-aggressive people ever make real friends or have trusting relationships?

- **Do you ever act this way?**
If any learners respond positively, ask them why.
Do they understand that other people and their feelings matter?
Why is the 'Golden Rule' ("do as you would be done by") so popular?
Stress that bad treatment of others usually backfires upon the perpetrator.
- **Why is aggressive behaviour not acceptable?**
Because it affects others badly (by hurting them or their feelings).
Because it does not consider other people and their feelings, which are important.
For example, how would they feel if their own interests and feelings were ignored?
- **Why are we trying to understand aggressive behaviour?**
So we can avoid behaving in this way.
So we can recognise this behaviour as unacceptable in others and deal with it appropriately (see lesson on 'Assertiveness').

Learner Worksheet

Understanding Aggressive Behaviour

Definition:
A person who behaves aggressively is someone who thinks that their needs are more important than those of others and will try to meet their needs regardless of the needs of others.

- What does an aggressive person do?
.....
- What does an aggressive person say?
.....
- If people behave aggressively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?
.....
- If an aggressive person's interests are ignored, how do you think they will react?
.....
- How could the aggressive person gain from behaving assertively instead?
.....

Passive Behaviour

Objectives

To help learners to:

- Recognise passive behaviour;
- Understand that passive behaviour is not a good reaction;

Age/level

Ages 9 to 14 years

Duration

Part of a lesson

Materials

Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen

Procedure

Write the following on the board and read it with the learners.

Definition:

A person who behaves passively is someone who thinks that their needs don't matter and other people's needs matter more and thus doesn't try to get their own needs met.

Their attitude is:

- I'm wrong. You're right.
- I lose. You win.
- I don't matter. You do matter.
- My feelings don't matter. Your feelings do matter.
- I'm not OK. You're OK.
- I'm weak. You're strong.

Then, organise the class into groups of five or six learners. Give each group a copy of the learner worksheet 'Understanding Passive Behaviour' (see on page 6 below). Ask each group to select someone to write out their answers and someone to present their findings to the class. Then, give them about five minutes or so to discuss and complete the questions on the worksheet.

When they have finished answering the questions on the worksheet, or after sufficient time has passed, ask each group in turn to present their findings to the class.

Then, continue the discussion. See below for 'Issues to Explore' in the discussion.

Issues to Explore

See the background information on Anger & Emotions, as well as the following points overleaf:

• **What does a passive person do?**

A passive person may:

- Give things to others;
- Avoid conflict at all costs;
- Run away from trouble;
- Let other people take advantage of them.

The learners may come up with more examples.

• **What does a passive person say?**

They are usually quiet, but if they speak it would be to give way to the demands of others. For example:

- 'I will give you my lunch if you leave me alone';
- 'I will give you my cell phone and pretend that I lost it, if you promise not to beat me up';
- 'I'll give you my money if you go away';
- 'What would you like next?'

The learners may come up with more examples.

• **If people behave passively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?**

No, there is likely to be a 'lose-win' outcome, because the passive person will not speak up for their own needs and interests.



Other questions that could be explored in discussion include:

• **Do you know anybody who acts passively?**

Here, you can ask learners whether the person acting passively is popular.

Are they considered to be a 'wimp'?

Do others take advantage of them?

• **Do you ever act this way?**

If any learners respond positively, ask them why.

Do they understand that their interests and feelings matter?

Ironically, such passive behaviour often does not avoid conflict but instead makes someone more vulnerable (others may see a passive person as an 'easy target').

• **Why is passive behaviour not desirable?**

Because the passive person suffers through not having their needs and interests met.

Other people learn to take advantage of them and this is no good for either party.

Eventually the passive person will become resentful and angry.

• **Why are we trying to understand passive behaviour?**

So we can avoid behaving in this way.

So we can recognise this behaviour in others and not take advantage of them, but instead encourage them to overcome it.

Learner Worksheet

Understanding Passive Behaviour

Definition:

A person who behaves passively is someone who thinks that his or her needs don't matter, that other people's needs matter more, and who doesn't try to get his or her own needs met.

- What does a passive person do?
- What does a passive person say?
- If people behave passively in conflict, is there likely to be a 'win-win' outcome?
- If the same importance is placed on the interests of a passive person as it is on the interests of others, how do you think they all will react?
- How would you go about getting a passive person to behave assertively?
- How could a passive person benefit from behaving assertively?

Passive-Aggressive Behaviour

Objectives

To help learners to:

- Recognise passive-aggressive behaviour;
- Understand that passive-aggressive behaviour is not desirable.

Age/level

Age 9 to 14 years

(The educator may decide to use this exercise only for older learners)

Duration

Part of a lesson

Materials

Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen

Procedure

Write the definition on the board and read it out to the class.

Definition:

Passive-aggressive people seem to comply with the desires and needs of others, but actually passively (indirectly) resist them. They also want to get their needs met, but are not prepared to be assertive about their real feelings.

Now choose learners to each read aloud one behaviour, in turn, to the class. After each reading, ask the class to demonstrate or act out the behaviour described.

Passive-Aggressive Behaviour

Passive-aggressive people may not be aware that they lack assertiveness skills. They often manipulate people to do things for them, but may be unaware of the games they play with others.

They may adopt some of these behaviours:

- Whinge, whine and plead;
- Cry or pretend to be weak so others will help them;
- Sulk, pretend not to hear, ignore questions;
- Try to make others feel guilty or accuse others;
- Use hostile or aggressive body language e.g. smirk, sneer, shrug or raise eyebrows;
- Tell lies or spread rumours to undermine others;
- Make excuses for not doing things;
- Blame others and not take responsibility for their actions;



- Tell on, or threaten to tell on, others;
- Be charming and flatter others to get their way;
- Play the victim by saying things like: 'No one ever gives me my turn';
- Say things to embarrass and put down others;
- Refuse to co-operate and negotiate;
- Frustrate, undermine or sabotage people around them;
- Try to convince others that they are overreacting or imagining things;
- Be jealous of people's successes and criticise, mock or scorn them;
- Storm out or make a scene.

Next, organise the class into groups of five or six learners. Give each group a copy of the learner worksheet 'Understanding Passive-Aggressive Behaviour'. Ask each group to select someone to write out their answers and someone to present their findings to the class. Then, give them about five minutes or so to discuss and complete the questions on the worksheet.

When they have finished, or after sufficient time has passed, ask each group in turn to present their findings to the class.

Then, continue the discussion. See below for 'Issues to Explore' in the discussion.