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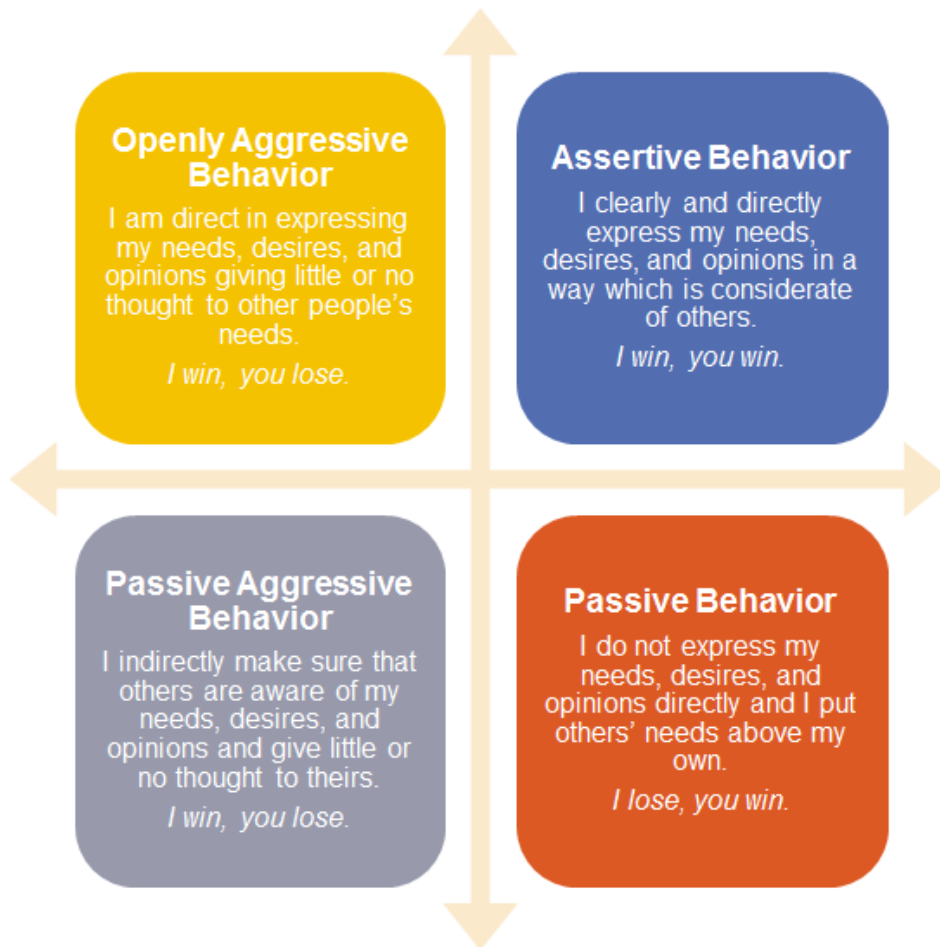


# Assertive Communication

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There's always room for improvement. Two-Minute Reads are a free tool you and your organization can use just for that reason.

Assertive Communication is communicating in a way that assures a win-win approach; this is important. Take a look at the following four styles of communication:



## Questions to Ponder:

- Which style do you use in normal circumstances?
- Which style do you use under pressure?
- How can you begin to improve your sense of assertive communication?

## **Developing Effective Communication Skills**

### **Step One: Start with Heart**

- Before you meet, identify your own Style Under Stress and manage it.
- Stay focused on what you really want and maintain dialogue.

### **Step Two: Ask to meet and name the issue**

### **Step Three: Once at the meeting, name the issue to be discussed again.**

- Stay in dialogue when you're angry, scared, or hurt.
- Discover your stories—how do you justify your behavior?
- Eliminate Victim, Villain, and Helpless Stories, and improve your results.

### **Step Four: State why the issue is a problem or opportunity.**

- Speak persuasively, not abrasively.
- Get your meaning across even with potentially threatening messages.
- Share strong opinions without shutting down contrary views.
- State your mind while making it safe for others to do the same.

### **Step Five: Learn to Look**

- Spot the warning signs that indicate safety is at risk.
- Notice various forms of silence and violence.
- Step back from a conversation and figure out how to make it work.

### **Step Six: Make It Safe I- Discuss your contribution to the problem.**

- Use "I" statements.
- Take steps to rebuild safety and return to dialogue.
- Talk about almost anything—without silence violence.
- Use skills to keep information flowing.

### **Step Seven: Make It Safe II-Ask the other to respond.**

- Establish and maintain mutual purpose and mutual respect.
- Recognize when you're at cross-purpose.
- Use exploring skills to make it safe for others to speak up.
- Diffuse the violence of others and eliminate silence.
- Get safely to the meaning behind others' emotions.

### **Step Eight: Move to Action-decide on next steps needed, by who and when.**

- Move from healthy dialogue to taking action and achieving results.

**During this conversation, remember to:**

**1. Breath and pause**

In fight mode, you feel heat, and you raise your voice.

In flight mode, you might feel anxious, and retreat in silence.

**2. Know the facts**

**3. Seek mutual purpose and show respect**

**4. Share ideas and understandings**

**5. Determine roles, tasks, and deadlines**

**6. Reach a decision by commanding, consulting, voting, or establishing consensus.**

In some scenarios, it is more important to reach fast decisions than clear instructions as part of the command style. In other situations, it is important to reach a mutual consensus.

**Putting It All Together**

**ASKING**

Your willingness to ask your peers or others for help or feedback will make you more effective individually and will keep others from having to guess about what you need.

**GIVING**

Offering your help or feedback to others will make them more effective. Your ability to actively extend assistance or offer feedback involves understanding and appreciating the other person's needs.

**RECEIVING**

Offering help and feedback is only effective if someone is willing to receive it. The level of trust you have together will influence this capacity.

**DOING**

If you ask and receive feedback you must now take action to create a response to the feedback.

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