

ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

DEFINITIONS

1. Assertive Behavior is behavior that permits a person to **stand up for his/her rights without denying others their rights.**
2. Assertive behavior is behavior that communicates **personal responsibility** and the **willingness to respect others as well as respect for self.**

Personal Responsibility: owning one's feelings, values, needs without blaming others: "I feel angry when ___ happens." rather than "You make me angry when ___." "I don't want to do ___" versus "Don't make me do ___."

Mutual Respect: Respect for one's own rights as a human being AND respect for the rights of the other as a fellow human being. This does not imply admiration, agreement, liking ; it simply means respecting the basic human rights of self and of others.

ATTITUDES

1. **Mutual Respect:** Respect for self and others as human beings. Avoiding manipulation via guilt or intimidation.
2. **Adult Responsibility:** Taking responsibility for one's actions, feelings, etc. -- not setting others up to take responsibility for us. Figuring out our own needs and feelings rather than hoping others will figure them out for us or somehow "know."
3. **Caring Directness:** Avoiding hints or generalities. Being specific versus vague.
4. **Consistency:** Verbal and non-verbal messages communicating the same thing. Avoiding mixed messages (e.g. words saying one thing; tone of voice saying the opposite).
5. **Pro-relationship:** person-to-person communication versus role-to-role, object-to-object. **Win-win approach** versus win-lose.

FORMULA: $R \rightarrow + R \leftarrow + S = A$

1. **R-->:** Convey **respect for the other person.** Give benefit of the doubt; recognize other's rights, feelings, needs. Be empathetic. Watch non-verbals, especially voice tone.
2. **R<--:** Convey **personal responsibility and respect for self.** Make **"I" statements.**
3. **S :** **Specificity.** Be specific and clear about what you feel, need, want, don't want. Avoid generalities, labeling others' behaviors, use of negatively weighted words. If you want someone to behave differently, let him/her know what you want changed. If you want to refuse a request, make sure the word "no" is clearly stated -- not merely hinted at.

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