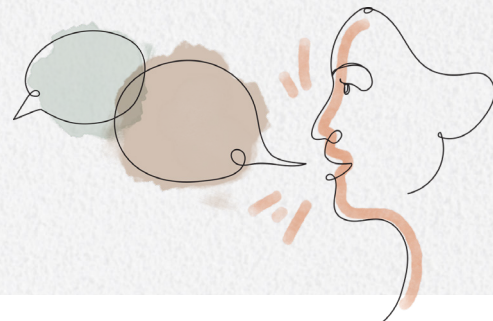


Being assertive



Assertiveness is a style of communication that enables you to express your opinion in a way that is clear and direct, whilst still respecting the views and opinions of others. Communicating in an assertive manner helps to minimise conflict, control anger, have ones needs better met, and to have more positive relationships with friends, family and others.

Tips for being assertive

- Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and rights. You have the right to these.
- Decide what to do - some examples might be whether to speak or not, consult a supervisor, or let it go. The key is to choose.
- Choose the right time to speak about your feelings. If you, or the other parties are angry, you may want to allow some time for the situation to calm down so you will be better able to express yourself.
- If you choose to speak up, communicate without blame by:
 - Consider the timing of your discussion. Make sure the time to talk suits all parties. For example, if someone is studying, this may not be the most appropriate time.
 - Take ownership of your position by using “I” statements, for example, “I feel insignificant when you talk over me, so please wait until I have finished speaking” is an assertive statement, where as “Stop always talking over me!” is an aggressive statement.
 - Be mindful to match your body language with what you are saying. Don’t say “I’m listening” while you are crossing your arms defensively.
 - If you notice that things start to get tense, or you or the other person is becoming angry then take a break and come back to the discussion after you have calmed down. You might want to go for a walk or do an activity to help you to let off some steam. See our ‘Grounding Techniques’ tip sheet for some strategies.
- Be prepared to listen to the other person and acknowledge their feelings. Remember feelings are never right or wrong and everyone is entitled to feel the way that they do.
- Be prepared to negotiate, depending on the seriousness of the behaviour and the nature of the relationship. Remember though, it is not appropriate to negotiate or tolerate violent behaviour.

To learn some skills in assertiveness or other helpful skills contact us at Student Wellbeing.

Online resources

Centre for Clinical Interventions: Assertiveness

[www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/
Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/
Assertiveness](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Assertiveness)



Access support and more information

www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling or call (02) 4921 6622