



## Assertiveness Training

### What is Assertiveness in CBT?

- Assertiveness is the ability to *express your thoughts, feelings, and needs openly and directly*, while also respecting the feelings and rights of others.
- Assertiveness is not about being passive or overly aggressive; it is a balance where you communicate clearly and confidently, and maintain health boundaries.
- CBT uses assertiveness training to help individuals recognize and change unhelpful patterns of thinking or behavior that prevent them from being assertive.
- Assertiveness is both verbal (what you say) and nonverbal (eye contact, posture, tone, and body language).

### Why is Assertiveness Helpful?:

- Increased Confidence: Learning to carry yourself assertively builds self confidence and trust in your individual abilities
- Better Boundaries: Assertiveness helps you learn to say “no” and set clear limits, reducing stress and resentment.
- Reduced Conflict: Open and honest communication prevents misunderstandings and helps resolve disagreements before they worsen.
- Better Decision-Making: Assertive individuals are able to make decisions more confidently, without excessive worry or anxiety about others’ judgments.

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## What are Examples of Assertiveness?

Assertiveness can be demonstrated in everyday situations, such as:

- Saying No: “I understand you’d like my help, but I’m unable to take on more tasks right now.”
- Making Requests: “I’d appreciate it if we could keep the volume down while I’m working because I find it distracting”
- Expressing Opinions: “I have a different perspective on this topic, and I’d like to share what I think.”
- Standing Up for Yourself: “I believe its turn in line; I’d like to go next, please.”
- Using “I” Statements: “I feel embarrassed when you point out my speech impediment and slow processing.”



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## **Exercise: Practicing Assertiveness with the DESC Script** (Describe, Express, Specify, and Consequences)

1. Describe: State the situation objectively.
  - “When you put me down in front of my coworkers while I’m studying...”
2. Express: Share your feelings using “I” statements.
  - “...I feel embarrassed and frustrated.”
3. Specify: Clearly state what you want to happen.
  - “I would like you to keep your negative comments to yourself.”
4. Consequences: Explain the positive outcome if your request is met.
  - “If you do, I’ll be able to finish my work sooner and have a more positive relationship with you.”

### Instructions:

- Think of a recent situation where you wanted to be more assertive.
- Write out a DESC script for that situation.
- Practice saying it aloud, focusing on a peaceful tone and positive body language.
- (Optional) Role-play the scenario in a group setting, and discuss how it felt to use assertive communication.



**Case #1:**

1. Describe: State the situation objectively.
2. Express: Share your feelings using “I” statements.
3. Specify: Clearly state what you want to happen.
4. Consequences: Explain the positive outcome if your request is met.



**Case #2:**

1. Describe: State the situation objectively.
2. Express: Share your feelings using “I” statements.
3. Specify: Clearly state what you want to happen.
4. Consequences: Explain the positive outcome if your request is met.



**Case #3:**

1. Describe: State the situation objectively.
2. Express: Share your feelings using “I” statements.
3. Specify: Clearly state what you want to happen.
4. Consequences: Explain the positive outcome if your request is met.