



Assertive Communication

There are four main categories of expressing yourself to others:

- I. **Passive**
- II. **Aggressive**
- III. **Passive/Aggressive**
- IV. **Assertive**

I. **Passive Behavior-** Often referred to as ***non-assertive*** behavior.

- The choice of non-action
- Usually avoidant and indirect
- Protection of rights and attainment of needs left to others

Group Questions: 1) What does passive behavior look like?

2) What feelings are behind passive behavior?

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Low risk	Avoid dealing with problems- Needs not met
It's easy	Destroys self confidence
Avoid trouble	Builds anger and resentment
Others have to do the work	Let others choose for you
Play it safe, Avoid mistakes	Let's others guess how you think and feel
*Sometimes saying nothing is the best choice	Others may take advantage





II. Aggressive Behavior- The other end of the spectrum.

- Dominating
- Insisting on your needs at the expense of others
- Can be physical or verbal or both

Group Questions: 1) What does aggressive behavior look like?

2) What kinds of feelings are behind aggressive behavior?

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Needs get met	Victimizes others
(you get what you want)	Others build anger and resentment toward you
	Violates rights of others
	Can lead to physical or emotional abuse
	Lose friends, gain enemies
	Not socially acceptable (especially when dealing with authority)
	Aggression breeds more aggression (retaliation)

GROUP QUESTION – Even if being aggressive may seem like a way to get things done quickly in the short term, what are some of the eventual long term consequences of an overly aggressive lifestyle?





III. Passive/Aggressive Behavior

- Combination of passiveness (outside) and aggression (inside)
- Described as: manipulative, deceitful, indirect
- Smiling on the outside, angry and resentful on the inside

1. What does passive/aggressive behavior look like?

Examples: *Deceptive* *Face/phony* *Put-downs (Passive/Aggressive Humor)*
 Sarcastic *Sneaky* *Talking behind others back*
 Vengeful *Vindictive* *Gossip*

2. How do you know when behavior is Passive/Aggressive?

- **The outside behavior does not match the inside thoughts- for example:**

OUTSIDE	INSIDE
"Thank you"	"I can't stand you"
"honest, I'll try really hard"	"I'm not doing this junk"
"you are my friend"	"you are a jerk"

Passive aggression can be subtle for example:

Habitual lateness *Insulting jokes*
Controlling others by making them wait *Sarcasm*
Being overly nice to someone's face *Spreading gossip*

- Can be any "back door" effort to evoke anger or other painful emotions in others.
- Passive/Aggressive behavior can result from a combination of anger and fear.





IV. **Assertive-** Standing up for and expressing what you think and feel while respecting the rights of others. Self-assured and direct in claiming one's rights but in a confident and considerate manner

PERSONAL RIGHTS and RESPECT

	MINE		YOURS	
Passive			X	➤ Only others needs are respected
Aggressive	X			➤ Only my needs are respected
Passive/Aggressive	-	[deceitful]	-	➤ Pretending to respect your needs but really not
Assertive	X		X	➤ Both mine and your needs are respected

What does assertive behavior look like?

Confident and relaxed

Open

Direct

Expressive

Emotionally Honest

Clear, firm speech

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Let's others know how you feel	None
Problem is attacked, not the person	
Establishes mutual respect	
Effective in setting needs met while avoiding conflict	

Group Question: If a person can learn to be assertive when necessary, how can that be beneficial in different life areas (School, work, family, socially) – How can assertiveness be a critical coping skill to have for effectively dealing with substance use issues? (In what situations may it be necessary to be assertive?)

