

Assertiveness worksheet

When people feel unable to assert themselves, or lack the skills to be assertive, communication breaks down and relationships suffer.

Assertiveness involves asking for what you want or saying no to something in a simple, direct, and honest manner. It is standing up for yourself without disrespecting others. This worksheet will help you practice being assertive.

Step 1 – Identify a problem situation by asking yourself these questions:

- What is the problem?
- Who is involved?
- How does it make me feel?
- What do I want?
- How would I normally handle the problem?

Step 2 – Plan the assertive response

Think of a time and place that is convenient for both of you.

Write down the problem the way you want to describe it to the other person

- State problem objectively, avoid “you” statements
- Object to the person’s behaviour, not the person
- State you feelings about the situation using “I”, not “You” statements

Step 3 – Write down your request

- Keep it short and simple — 1 to 2 sentences
- Be specific
- Use I statements
- Ask for one thing at a time
- Don't explain why you deserve it
- Don't apologize for making the request
- Don't demand, command, or make ultimatums (this is it or else)
- State the consequences of getting your request granted (positive emotions, or removal of negative emotions)
- If you want to decline a request, do it as simply and straightforwardly as you would make a request such as no thank you, no, I'm not interested in that, no, I'm not able to do that.

Assertiveness worksheet example for practice:

Brian is 57 years old, married, with 2 grown children and 3 grandchildren. Brian has had low back pain on and off for 10 years. He has been retired since the age of 55, although his wife, who is 49, still works.

Brian has taken over the cooking duties on weekdays. His daughter, with 2 young children, often stops by about dinner time, and his wife usually invites them all to stay.

Here is Brian's completed Assertiveness Worksheet.

Step 1 – Identify the problem

What is the problem?

- My wife invites my daughter and grandkids to stay for dinner without asking me.

Who is involved?

- My wife, my daughter, my 2 grandkids.

How does it make you feel?

- Disrespected, taken for granted, and mad.

What do you want?

- I don't mind if they come to dinner sometimes, but I want to know beforehand.

How would you normally handle the problem?

- I usually don't say anything, but then my wife asks me later why I was so grumpy. I tell her my back was acting up, which it usually is.

What do you think would happen if you gave an assertive response?

- I might not be as mad inside. I could plan instead of being surprised. I'd enjoy my grandkids visit more. My wife might get mad at me.

Step 2 – Plan the assertive response

Time & Place

- Over morning coffee, before my wife leaves for work.

My Problem — Write it the way you want to describe it to the other person

- It makes me mad when you invite Cindy and the kids to stay for dinner on the spur of the moment without asking me.

Step 3 – Write down your request

“I want you to talk to me before you ask Cindy and the kids to stay for dinner – preferably before I start cooking. If we could plan ahead of time, I'd be more relaxed and less grumpy.”

Assertiveness worksheet

Think of one situation that is a problem for you right now – one that you would like to handle assertively.

Step 1 – Identify a problem situation

What is the problem?

Who is involved?

How does it make me feel?

What do I want?

How would I normally handle the problem?

What do I think would happen if I gave an assertive response

Step 2 – Plan the assertive response

Time & Place

My Problem — Write it the way you want to describe it to the other person

Step 3 – Write down your request

My Request