

## Assertive Behaviors

Appropriate use of assertive behaviors can enhance one's mental health, self-esteem, communication, and interpersonal relationships.

1. Express your feelings. Communicate directly, clearly, specifically, and honestly.
2. State your "wants" without interfering with the rights of others.
3. Use "soft assertions":
  - a. Express your positive, caring feelings toward others.
  - b. Express your angry feelings in a constructive way.
  - c. Give sincere compliments readily (frequent positive strokes).
  - d. Positively accept compliments.
4. State honest disagreements without attacking others.
5. Be able to say "No" firmly and without excuses.
6. Think and talk positively about yourself.
7. Keep in touch with friends.
8. Take the initiative in forming new friendships.

## Tenets of an Assertive Philosophy

1. By standing up for ourselves and letting ourselves be known to others, we gain self-respect from other people.
2. By trying to live our lives in such a way that we never hurt anyone under any circumstances, we end up hurting ourselves – and other people.
3. When we stand up for ourselves and express our honest feelings and thoughts in direct and appropriate ways, everyone usually benefits in the long run. Likewise, when we demean other people, we also demean ourselves and everyone involved loses in the process.
4. By sacrificing our integrity and denying our personal feelings, relationships are usually damaged or prevented from developing. Likewise, personal relationships are hurt when we try to control others through hostility, intimidation, or guilt.
5. Personal relationships become more authentic and satisfying when we share our honest reactions with other people and do not block others' sharing their reactions with us.
6. Not letting others know what we think and feel is just as selfish as not attending to other people's thoughts and feelings.
7. When we frequently sacrifice our rights, we teach other people to take advantage of us.
8. By being assertive and telling other people how their behavior affects us, we are giving them an opportunity to change their behavior, and we are showing respect for their right to know where they stand with us.