Did You Know?

When students are assertive, they are less likely to get into fights.

Thought Starters

One person I really respect is (_____ *) because:*

_____

_____

I can tell when someone respects me by:

_____

_____

When I talk with someone I respect, I:

_____

_____

Instructions

1. Look at the way the mouse is communicating to get his cheese back in each cartoon.
2. Choose a communication style—passive, aggressive, or assertive—that best describes the way the mouse is communicating.
3. Write your choice on the line below each cartoon.

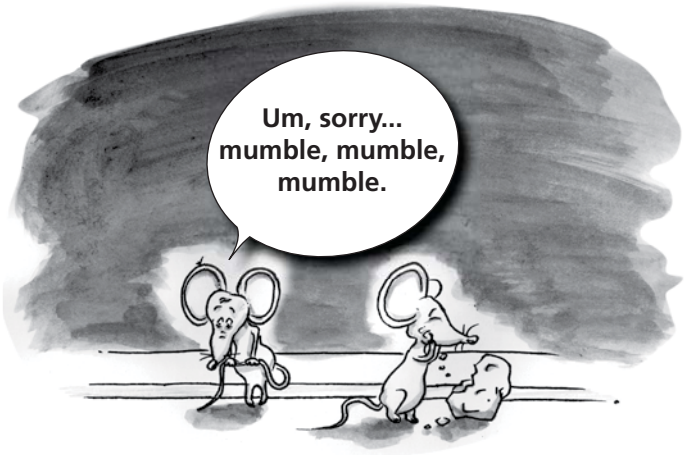


Chart of Communication Styles

Characteristic	Passive		Assertive
Words that give the message...	I am not important. My opinions don't matter.	You are not important. Your opinions don't matter.	We are both important. Both of our opinions matter.
Tone of voice	Timid, unclear.	Forceful or accusing.	Clear, firm, calm.
Facial expression	Eyes looking down or away. Worried or uncertain expression.	Glaring, narrow eyes. Hard, angry expression.	Eyes looking at the person. Confident expression.
Body language	Head down, shoulders round. Slumped posture.	Tense body, clenched fists, pointing fingers. Confrontational posture.	Head up, shoulders back. Confident posture.

Skill-Practice Instructions

1. Decide which set of partners will practice first and which will be the coaches.
2. One practice partner reads the situation while the others listen carefully.
3. The coaches suggest assertive responses to the situation.
4. The student who is practicing chooses one of these responses or uses one of his or her own.
5. The coaches give encouraging feedback and fill in the checklist.

Assertive Communication Checklist

Assertive communication skill	Student 1	Student 2
Look at the other person.	☐	☐
Keep your head up and shoulders back.	☐	☐
Use a calm voice.	☐	☐
Use respectful, clear language.	☐	☐

Set 1

The Party
You are hanging out with a group of friends on a Friday night. You're trying to decide what to do. Your best friend wants to go to a party, and you know no adults will be there. Your parents don't allow you to go to parties when no adults are home. Besides, you want to go to a movie. Assertively tell your friends what you want.

Silent Treatment
A friend wants you to ignore another friend because she's mad at her. You don't have a problem with this other friend. You don't think it's fair to give the other girl the silent treatment. Assertively tell your friend your perspective.

Team Morale
You have a teammate who constantly puts down other team members when they make mistakes. You think this is bad for team morale. Assertively tell your teammate your perspective about his or her behavior.

Joking Around
Every time a particular kid in your math class walks past your desk, he "accidentally" knocks your pencil, paper, or book off your desk. You are annoyed by his "joking around," and you want him to stop. Assertively tell him what you want.

Set 2

Family Insult
A classmate makes fun of your family. You feel insulted and angry. Your family's reputation is very important to you. Assertively tell your classmate your perspective.

Cigarettes
You are at a new friend's house. This friend finds a pack of his or her father's cigarettes and says, "Let's try one!" Assertively tell your new friend that you don't want to smoke.

The Assignment
You were talking quietly to the person sitting next to you when your teacher gave out the writing assignment. She has told the class to work silently on the assignment and you don't know what it is. You need to ask her to repeat the assignment and apologize for not hearing it the first time. In private, tell your teacher what happened in an assertive way.

Band Harassment
As you're getting out your instruments in band class, your friends start harassing another kid who often acts kind of strange. He's not a friend of yours, but you feel that even though you think he's a little weird, no one deserves to be harassed. Assertively tell your friends your perspective.

Name: _____

Sometimes you "hear" what a person is saying without him or her saying a word. You can often tell a person's communication style just by looking at his or her facial expressions and body language. A passive communicator might have slumped posture. An aggressive communicator might have glaring, narrow eyes. An assertive communicator holds his or her head up while looking straight at you.

Now try to "hear" different communication styles just by looking at them.

1. Look through magazines or newspapers for people who are using passive, aggressive, and assertive communication.
2. Find one image for each, and glue them in the boxes to the right.
3. Imagine what each person might be saying. Write it in the space below each picture.
4. Now show the pictures and descriptions to an adult. Can he or she guess which style of communication each person is using? Circle their answer.
5. If he or she guessed wrong, go over with him or her the characteristics of different styles of communication. If he or she guessed right—way to go!

This homework assignment was completed on

_____ .
(date)

_____
[adult] signature

Style: Passive Aggressive Assertive

glue picture here

What is the person saying?

Style: Passive Aggressive Assertive

glue picture here

What is the person saying?

Style: Passive Aggressive Assertive

glue picture here

What is the person saying?

Name: _____

Answer each question to explain what you learned. Then write a reflection to show how what you learned connects to your life.

What I Learned

Describe the tone of voice of someone who is:

Passive _____

Aggressive _____

Assertive _____

Connecting to My Life

Briefly describe a situation in which you could have been more assertive, and describe how acting assertively could have helped.

Preparation

1. Put students into groups.
2. Give each student another copy of Handout 5C and each group a set of the additional scenarios below.

Instructions for Students

In your group, read and follow the skill-practice instructions on Handout 5C using the new set of scenarios.

Additional Scenarios

Set 1

Lunch Money

A friend keeps forgetting to return things he or she has borrowed from you. Last week he or she borrowed five dollars, and you really need the money back to buy lunch. Assertively tell your friend what you need.

Mean Things

You find out that a friend has been saying mean things about you behind your back. You feel hurt and angry and you want him or her to stop. Assertively tell your friend your perspective.

Please Knock!

Your younger sibling keeps barging into your room. You feel this is an invasion of your privacy and you want your sibling to knock before entering. Assertively tell your sibling your perspective.

A Beer from the Fridge

You're at a friend's house after school, and there are no adults home. Your friend's older brother asks you to go to the fridge and get him a beer. Assertively tell him you don't want to do that.

Set 2

Staring

A student you don't know is staring at you obnoxiously in the library while you're trying to work. You've already told him to stop once. He's making it difficult for you to concentrate. Assertively tell him what you want.

Borrowing Clothes

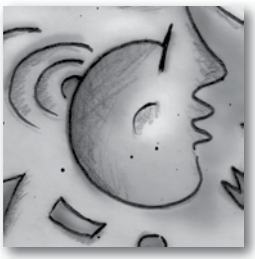
Your brother or sister keeps borrowing your clothes without asking. You feel that it is all right to share clothes sometimes, but you really want to be asked first. Assertively tell your sibling your perspective.

Throwing Pencils

A friend you sit with on the bus is throwing pencils out the window when the bus driver isn't looking. You know this is a dangerous thing to do. You don't want anyone to get hurt. You also don't want to be accused of joining in, because you are sitting right next to her. Assertively tell your friend your perspective.

The Line

You've been waiting patiently at the deli counter to be helped. There isn't a formal line, so when the deli worker asks "Who's next?" a woman who hasn't noticed that you've been waiting longer says, "I am." You're in a hurry and don't think it is fair for someone else to take your turn. Assertively tell the deli worker and the other woman what you need.



Language Arts and Social Studies
What would an assertive pig say to an aggressive wolf?

Have students work in groups to write and perform a script for a Readers' Theater. First, read aloud (or have a student read aloud) "The Three Little Pigs" (or any other applicable folktale from your students' heritage). Then have each group take the theme from the story and rewrite it. The first two pigs are passive communicators. The wolf is an aggressive communicator. The third pig is an assertive communicator. The third pig must confront the wolf in an assertive manner. Have each group perform their story for the class.

Health and Science
Can dogs be assertive?

Have students groups research the different ways dogs communicate. Direct your students to look for examples of how dogs communicate joy, anger, anxiety, submission, and dominance. Can dogs be passive, assertive, or aggressive in the ways they communicate these things? What are the similarities and differences between the ways dogs and humans communicate the same feelings? Have each group report their findings to the class.

Media Literacy
Is there a better way to resolve this dispute?

Record sports or political news clips from TV or the Web that show passive and/or aggressive communication styles. Put students in groups. Play the clips. Have each group identify the dispute. Then ask: What communication style are they using? How can you tell? Have students describe how the dispute may have been resolved differently if assertive communication was used. Have each group report on their story to another group or the class.