

Acknowledging Youths c1c

EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING DAY

- *Are there communication techniques that can help you be more effective in interviews and in the workplace?*
- *What is it that makes your employers colleagues tick?*

Come join this fun, hands-on and interactive course designed especially for those who are unemployed and are wishing to build assertiveness skills for the workplace.

This course considers the practical skills needed to communicate and present yourself well in the workplace and to help you gain workplace confidence, whether working in a team or on your own.

The aim of this session is to encourage participants to be more confident when communicating with others. To achieve this, participants will be introduced to the skills and knowledge required to be an assertive person including practical positive psychology tips oral and body language. Through this course you will be able to identify your strengths and further to improve these skills.

Finally, participants will be asked to put these new skills to practice in dealing with a number of workplace or interview scenarios.

This course provides participants with an informative workbook with tasks used during the sessions. The workbook is also a valuable manual to help and support you after the course.

YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT;

- RECOGNISING THE SKILLS AND QUALITIES NEEDED FOR SUCCESS AT WORK.
- BEING CLEAR ABOUT WHICH SKILLS YOU NEED TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE.
- TIME MANAGEMENT - Attendance and time keeping
- PRESENTING YOURSELF FOR WORK AND INTERVIEWS - Health & hygiene
- UNDERSTANDING AND STRENGTHENING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- IDENTIFYING AND IMPROVING CUSTOMER CARE SKILLS

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- ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

Introduction

In part one we will consider:

- 1. Who are your customers?*
- 2. How charismatic are your customer care skills?*

1. Who are your customers?

2. How charismatic are your customer care skills?

The majority of you, without doubt, have a natural instinct on how to help learners, colleagues, parents and visitors. This part of the session still focuses on customer service skills but takes some time to consider your inner strengths and qualities. If there is one thing that will help you deal with any number of customers it's using your own charismatic style (yes, you all have it!).

Does your work face say I'm efficient but generally happy or I'm efficient but generally miserable? When a student approaches you are you ready for trouble or ready to help? When that crazed middle manager emails you do you instantly press delete or go into a spiral of uncontrollable spasms? The problem with customer care is that it's all about interacting with other human beings. This is why customer care can be such a challenging role!

There is one skill that is imperative when addressing customers and that is confidence in your self and your abilities. To start lets have a quick look at the concept of charisma.

A charismatic person would look some thing like:

- Calm but energetic*
- Confident*
- A good posture*
- Lively eyes and facial expression*

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❑ *The ability to listen intensely*

Charismatic customer care – the key

1. Walk the walk

Think about simple things like how you walk/approach the people you work with. Carry yourself tall. Walk smoothly and quickly. Hold your head up, instead of staring at the ground. Let the person you are approaching know that you are confident, in control and willing and able to take whatever they have to throw at you (in the nicest possible way).

2. What does your face say about you?

Unravel your facial expression, forget that screen saver face which pops up when you're in between nicer facial expressions.

3. Stop moaning

Whingeing is to charisma what ice was to the Titanic. Whingeing doesn't just come out of your mouth, it seeps through every pore, expression and gesture. Charismatic people are entrancing conversationalists and moaning is not their style.

4. Aerobic listening

We discussed listening skills in session one but they are worth mentioning again because charismatic people are not always good talkers but they tend to always be good listeners. They make a person feel special or important. So, when listening to a student, parent or visitor show you are listening. Use eye contact, nodding and other visual responses, face to face and torso-facing.

4. Confidence

Charismatic people look comfortable in their own skin. They never come across as one of the walking wounded. They never look as if they don't like the look of themselves, but their confidence never becomes arrogance.

5. Self rapport

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So, you need to acquire self-rapport if your customer care is going to sound genuine. Saying to a parent whose son has just had a disastrous field trip, “I’m so sorry James fell in a river and nearly drowned”, while smiling with your hands rubbing together, doesn’t really portray the message that you’re sorry. It says to the parent, “serves that cheeky little rat right, he’s driven me mad all year”.

How to get there

The next exercise asks you to think about yourself in the workplace, which on the whole we don’t really get a chance to do very often. Please answer the questions on the following page as honestly as you can.

Inner Esteem Self-Assessment

1. How do you take a compliment?

- I say, ‘Thanks, that’s great.’
- I feel embarrassed.
- Compliments? You must be kidding.
- I wonder what the person’s after.
- I wonder whether they were really trying to tell me something was bad before.

ANSWER THE NEXT QUESTIONS WITH ‘Yes’ OR ‘No’

2. Do you enjoy social occasions where you have to meet new people?

3. Do you like working as part of a team or are you happier working alone?

4. Would you be daunted if you found yourself sharing a lift with your boss?
(Or, if you are the boss, with one of your managers?)

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5. Do you ever feel shy at work? If so, when?

6. Do you enjoy chatting at work and have a bit of a reputation for it?

7. If you were called in to see the boss today, would you expect it to be good or bad news?

8. How good do you think you are at inter-personal communications, like team briefings?

9. Do you think other members of staff like you?

10. Which work situations make you the most nervous? Analyse why this is. Make a list of the reasons.

11. Would you mind walking the full length of an open-plan office, knowing people were watching you?

12. Do you enjoy new challenges at work or prefer sticking to routine tasks?

13. Are you good at speaking up at meetings?

14. If you deal with a customer face-to-face, do you find yourself taking things personally and responding emotionally if they have a complaint?

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15. Do you ever use phrases like: 'I know this might sound stupid...' before you raise a point at work?

16. Do you find you tend to be passive at work, agreeing to take on too much in the spirit of 'anything for a quiet life?'

PRESENTATION AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

When we are in the workplace it is especially important for us to take care of our presentation and personal hygiene. We are always working around other people and we are often dealing with members of the public. The moment you are working for any organisation an outsider will view you as being representing that organisation. You will become a living working image of that organisation – A representative.

Our personal presentation can boil down to;

- a) What shoes are you wearing?
- b) What clothes you are wearing.

GROUP TASK: Discuss & Write:

- What shoes/clothes do you think are appropriate for an interview? Why
- What shoes/clothes do you think are in appropriate for an interview? Why

Here is a quiz. Answer each question on your own by ticking each box. We will share the correct answers together when everyone has finished.

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What is Personal Hygiene?

1. Using soap to clean yourself
2. Dental check-ups
3. Taking care of your body, cleaning yourself, getting dental check-ups and more
4. Taking showers

2

How often should you get dental check-ups?

- a) 2-3 times per year
- b) Once every 5 years
- c) Once per week
- d) Never

3

What should be used every time you shower?

- a) Bubble bath
- b) Shaving cream
- c) Shampoo, conditioner and body wash
- d) Soap

4

What is having good personal hygiene a good prevention of?

- a) Tooth decay
- b) Body odour
- c) Diseases and sicknesses
- d) Losing hair
- e) Looking ugly

5

What is the thin, flimsy item used to get extra food out of your teeth?

- a) A toothbrush
- b) Mouthwash
- c) Yarn
- d) Floss

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When are 2 out of the 4 good times to put on deodorant?

- a) Before a party
- b) During a work break on a hot day
- c) After a shower and in the morning
- d) After you go to the bathroom and before you eat
- e) Before any sporting activity

7

When are good times to brush your teeth during the day?

- a) Before you eat, after you eat, and before bed
- b) Whenever you want to
- c) In the morning/after breakfast, after lunch, and after dinner/before bed
- d) After you have a drink

9

What are the least times you should brush your teeth?

- a) Once a day
- b) Twice a day
- c) Once a week
- d) Once every 2 weeks

10

How often should you change your tooth brush?

- a) Once every few years
- b) Once every 3 months
- c) Once a year
- d) Twice a year

11

When are some good times to wash your hands?

- a) After being on public transport
- b) After being around someone who is sick,
- c) Before going to sleep and after you wake up
- d) After touching waste bins, touching animals, before and after handling food, taking out the trash, etc.

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What are two good ways to keep your skin healthy?

- a) Taking showers and putting on body lotions
- b) Wearing deodorant and sunscreen
- c) Drinking water and regularly eating fresh fruit and veggies
- d) Playing with dolls

LEARNING BETTER COMMUNICATIONS

When explaining/describing:

- Use strong visual words that paint a picture.
- Use analogies and metaphors to explain ideas differently.
- When giving instructions, slow down and use emphasis to clarify important words.
- Don't use too many words. Keep it simple and precise.

During the interaction:

- Be polite and respectful using words such as sir, Mrs, etc. Wait for permission to use the first name.
- Spell out names and repeat numbers.
- Consider the receiver and their fluency in English.
- Watch judgemental words such as should and ought.
- Use the customer's name two-to-three times during the interaction, particularly at important moments of truth.

Technical terms:

- Try to avoid jargon or slang.
- If you use technical terms, make sure you define them.
- Establish common vocabulary;
- Don't make assumptions when talking to those with less technical or product knowledge.

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When there are problems:

- Don't commit to solving the problem. You can commit to doing your best to solve it.
- Don't criticise the customer or say it's their fault.
- Express ownership when talking about problems: 'I am going to take personal responsibility for this'.
- Be positive: 'I'm going to help you any way I can.'
- Only provide the necessary truth. There is a tendency to tell customers everything that's happening when they only need to know what will help them to move forward in the service interactions.
- Give reassurance such as 'looks like we are on the right track.'

Following are some other guidelines:

- Don't be condescending or judgemental.
- Don't sound apathetic or anxious.
- Don't get impatient.
- Be enthusiastic and encouraging.
- Be sincere and genuine.
- Do sound caring.
- Do sound as if you are calm and in control.
- Make sure there is constant dialogue.
- Be confident in your delivery.

GROUP TASK:

- 1) *What different types of customers might you meet in your workplace or a place where you would like to work (Your ideal workplace)?*

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- 2) *Specify at least one time you have dealt with a customer you have worked with. What happened?*
- 3) *Name some places you have attended as a customer in the past week and received good customer service – Make a note of what happened.*
- 4) *How did good customer service make you feel? - Discuss*
- 5) *Will you go there again?*

YOUR TASK: *Write down 2 examples of how you have provided good customer care.*

TONALITY & DELIVERY

- 1 Repeat the following sentence several times 'I did not say you stole the watch
- 2 As you repeat the sentence, place a different emphasis on each word as underlined
- 3 Make a note of the different meaning you inferred from the emphasis, and why it had a different meaning.

I did not say you stole the watch.

I **did not** say you stole the watch.

I did not **say** you stole the watch.

I did not say **you** stole the watch.

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I did not say you **stole** the watch.

I did not say you stole **the** watch.

I did not say you stole the **watch**.

Answers for these interpretations are listed below.

As you can see, changing only the emphasis changed the whole meaning of the sentence. Getting upset or playing loser tapes can cause us to change our delivery, inadvertently influencing the receiver in a negative way.

Answers

Statement	Meaning
I did not say you stole the watch.	Someone else said you stole it.
I did not say you stole the watch	Firm emphasis.
I did not say you stole the watch.	I inferred you stole the watch.
I did not say you stole the watch.	Someone else stole the watch.
I did not say you stole the watch.	You borrowed the watch.
I did not say you stole the watch.	You stole a cheaper watch.
I did not say you stole the watch .	You stole something else.

How to be a good listener

1. Here's how to be a good listener.....

a. Get rid of prejudice thought!

Let's go back to the quiz question

"How many animals of each species... think about it, of each species... did Moses take into the Ark?"



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The lesson of this riddle is quite simple: if we want to listen professionally, we need to empty our heads of all our own thoughts, pre-conceptions and assumptions. Working on your responses while others are still giving you information means your listening skills are diluted.

b. Master the Mechanics of Maximum Listening

When people see that you're really listening to them, their whole attitude towards you changes, they respect you more; appreciate you more; and are more grateful to you.

The trouble is that the opposite is also the case. When they think you're not listening to them, they think you don't care; you're being disrespectful; and not taking them seriously.

That's why it's important to master the mechanics of maximum listening, even if...

... **You have to fake it!!!!**

If we're all honest, even the most professional listeners have moments when their minds wander. Thoughts of tonight's golf match, or those bargain shoes in the shop window that might be gone by 5.00pm. Somehow they just creep in. That's why now and again you have to pull yourself up with a jolt and get back into maximum listening mode. As a guide consider the following:

A for Attention. If your attention wanders, don't panic. Just take it gently back to where it should be. *If you've missed what someone's been saying, ask them to clarify or go over it again.*

B for Body Language. Since people are speaking and we're not, it's our body language that tells them we're red-hot interested in what they're saying.

C for Conversation Encouragers. These are also known as minimal encouragers because they quietly encourage the other person to keep on talking. They're the

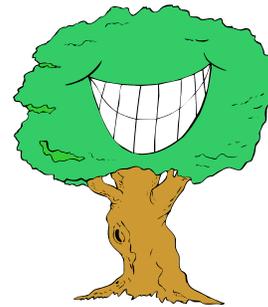
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"uh-uhs", "mm's" and "I see's". Mind you, if you're in faking mode, don't overdo these or you'll give the game away.

If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what someone is saying, try repeating their words mentally as they say it - this will reinforce their message and help you control mind drift.

c. Focus on Them, Not You

- hold steady eye contact with them
- smile
- lean forward
- bend your head slightly forward
- keep your body totally still and relaxed
- nod your head
- breathe deeply and evenly.



Good communication skills require a high level of self-awareness. Understanding your personal style of communicating will go a long way towards helping you to create good and lasting impressions on others. By becoming more aware of how others perceive you, you can adapt more readily to their styles of communicating. This does not mean you have to be a chameleon, changing with every personality you meet. Instead, you can make another person more comfortable with you by selecting and emphasising certain behaviours that fit within your personality and resonate with another. In doing this, you will prepare yourself to become an active listener.

d. Take into account differing communication skills

Not everyone communicates in the same way, certain individuals can be aggressive in their stance, speak English as a second language (or third, fourth & fifth!), or suffer from extreme self-confidence, which makes them appear aggressive. Those who are good at customer care can rise above this and even break down some of these barriers.

This does not mean you have to tolerate abuse!



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If you do feel that a person is being abusive with you (e.g., will not stop swearing at you), refuse to help that person and refer them to your manager. BUT remember if you can turn the situation around that's real customer care!

WORKING WITH AND AROUND OTHERS

At work, even when we are working on our own, we are still working in an environment with others. This means that we need to use the best communication skills and the best work practice.

What are some of the different ways we can communicate in the workplace?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

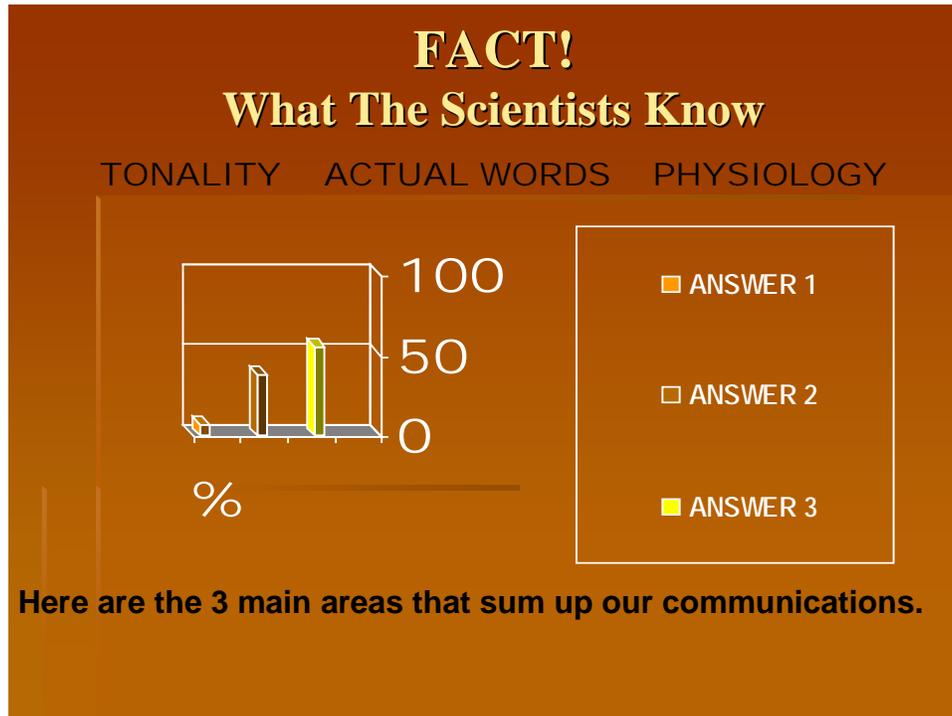
THE COMMUNICATIONS BETTING GAME:

Our human communications boil down to 3 main factors;

- ✓ Actual words
- ✓ Body language
- ✓ Tonality (Our tones of voice)

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Which area of communication has the most impact and what percentage score would you give each? (Remember, no cheating, your total sum must add up to 100)



OUR COMMUNICATIONS =	TONALITY	WORDS	BODY LANGUAGE
GUESS %			
ANSWER:			

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Our actual use of voice and tonality is responsible for creating huge impact in our communications. Therefore, in order to communicate assertively and effectively it is important that we command a good use of our vocal range, placements and vocal dynamics. Despite this fact, very few of us know anything about the voice; how to care for it and how to best use it. For the most part, we use our voices unconsciously, unaware as to how to connect with the best results, unaware as to how the voice can assist us with speaking assertively and confidently. Using appropriate tones and volumes are essential for engaging others and for confident communications. Knowledge of breath control can help with projection, relaxing your communications and for controlling nerves.

In the West, we have a notably poor consciousness regarding our personal relationship to our voices. Unless already engaged in public speaking or the performing arts, most UK adults are uncomfortable about their voices. Exercising the voice with a vocal coach or singing tutor can stimulate both great vocal confidence as well as improving the strength and dynamics of your voice. As your vocal abilities begin to improve, so will your vocal confidence. Your professional coach or singing tutor will work with you on both your voice and physiology. You will find that it is an important back bone to the new assertive behaviour that you are developing. Group singing is great recreational fun because, in the sessions, you will feel supported by the other group members. This is a great tool for developing the voice, improving confidence and for stress relief.

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WHAT AREAS OF VOICE WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK ON THAT COULD IMPACT YOUR OVERALL COMMUNICATIONS?

-
-
-
-
-
-

Write 2 (baby) steps that you can and will do within the next 3 weeks to achieve this aim.

1.

2.

Next to each goal, write a date by which you will have achieved (or failed to achieve) this step.

Communications Game 2: DEVELOPING RAPPORT (Matching & Mirroring and Listening)

Now, discuss in pairs:

- a) What was your most favourite holiday ever and why? Describe it to your partner.
- b) Who is your best friend? Why? Describe them to your partner.

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c) What have you learnt from this exercise?

GROUP TASK:

Name some ways that you feel you can establish verbal and vocal rapport with another person.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND RAPPORT

When we communicate assertively, we are looking to connect, work and share from the most harmonious ways possible so as to achieve the best solutions for all. The study of rapport looks at unconscious human interactions that aid this process. These simple yet profound techniques can assist by enhancing confident communications.

ASSETIVENESS IN THE WORK PLACE

- 1) They do not have a right to trample upon other's personal boundaries and that others do not have a right to trample on their personal boundaries*
- 2) That acting assertively rather than aggressively or passively will often get them more of what they want from other people, because in so doing, they will respect those other people who will then be more motivated and willing to help them.*

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What is assertiveness?

Assertiveness has been defined as;

“Being able to express and act on your rights as a person whilst respecting the same rights in others”

(The Counsellor's Handbook Second Edition: by Rowan Bayne)

TIME MANAGEMENT & ASSERTIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	YES	NEVER	SOMETIMES
Do you find it hard to express how you feel?			
Do you find it hard to make requests or ask for help from managers and colleagues at work?			
Do you find it difficult to request a meeting of seniors at work?			
Do you find it difficult to admit uncertainty/ignorance in some area?			
Do you find it difficult to admit confusion in a discussion and ask for clarification?			
Do you find it difficult to make decisions?			
If over burdening/inconvenient requests are asked of you, do you find it hard to say no?			
Do you find it difficult to say if you have been offended?			
If a person has borrowed something and it is overdue, do you find it hard to mention it?			
When a person is unfair at work, do you find it hard to say so?			
When you don't get a good service, do you find it hard to complain?			
Are you reluctant to ask people for favours or help?			

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Are you reluctant to speak up in discussion or debate?			
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REVIEW:

How many ticks have you got in the 'Yes' column? If you have more than 3, you may need to think about being more assertive, as this may be creating problems managing your time both at work and at home. If you have an overwhelming number in the 'No' boxes, you may be a little too assertive – how do others perceive you? Do you need to modify your approach to other people?

Through assertive training and adapting more assertive behaviour, you will come to realise that it is okay, and even correct to stand up for yourself and to resist being taken advantage of. By practicing and repeating assertive behaviour, you will find that actually defending yourself is not so hard. Assertive behaviour basically consists of the following steps:

- Realising/recognising that you have been dominated, or taken advantage of
- Feeling the angry feelings (directed towards the dominating person, and/or to yourself for allowing yourself to be dominated)
- Deciding to act to put a stop to the domination
- Acting on your conviction (which involves finding a way to demand your rights be respected, while also being polite and civil about it so as not to become aggressive yourself)
- (Perhaps) waiting for your dominating relationship partner to escalate his or her bad behaviour, so as to put you back in line and force you to submit again and finally
- Resisting the urge to submit again in the face of escalation.

In order to adapt more assertive behaviour, we need to understand some basic human rights for ourselves and for others. Below is guideline that helps to make this clearer.

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I have the right to be treated with respect	Others have the right to be treated with respect
I have the right to express my thought opinions and values	Others have the right to express my thought opinions and values
I have the right to express my feelings	Others have the right to express their feelings
I have the right to say "No" without feeling guilty	Others have the right to say "No" without feeling guilty
I have the right to be successful	Others have the right to be successful
I have the right to make mistakes	Others have the right to make mistakes
I have the right to change my mind	Others have the right to change their mind.
I have the right to say I don't understand	Others have the right to say they don't understand
I have the right to ask for what I want.	Others have the right to ask for what they want.
I have the right to decide for myself whether or not I am responsible for another person's problems	Others have the right to decide for themselves whether (or not) they are responsible for another person's problems.
I have the right not to choose to assert myself.	Others have the right not to choose to assert themselves.

(From Bond Stress & Self-Awareness)

With both passive and aggressive behaviours, the growth curve that we are aiming for lies within communication. It is through thought, recognising our patterns and changing the way we think that you will be able to develop improved skills how you communicate.

Through assertiveness training you will be aiming to deal with both passive and aggressive behaviours, the growth curve that we are aiming for lies within

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communication. It is through thought, recognising our patterns and changing the way we think that you will be able to develop improved skills how you communicate. Through assertiveness training you will be aiming to:

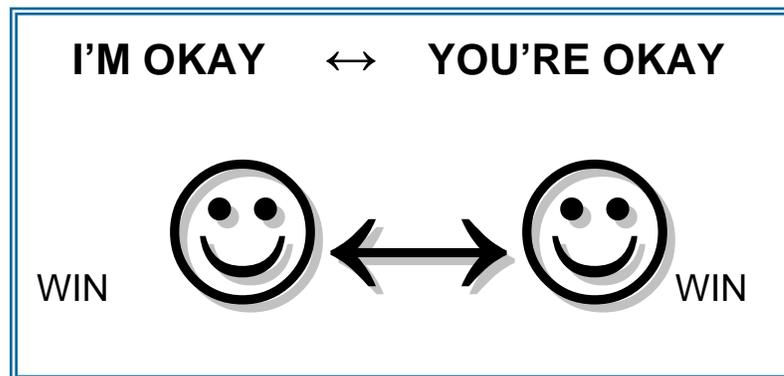
SO WHAT IS ASSERTIVENESS?

Change the way you think

In order to change the way you feel

In order to get a better deal

ASSERTIVENESS



Assertiveness skills help a person to deal with other people in an **open straightforward** and **honest** way so that everyone knows where they stand. They help to maintain psychological & physical health and well-being, so that people are fit to handle the everyday stress of the workplace.

Assertive behaviour is based on the following foundations:

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- ❑ *Honesty – Clear statements of needs*
- ❑ *Feelings and opinions directly stated without apology*
- ❑ *Communications stated sensitively and with respect for the rights of others*

It enables people to make their situation known but not see the situation as 'All or Nothing' or 'Win or Lose' it allows for flexibility. It allows a person to compromise without loss of dignity or confidence. To see your communications as 'All or Nothing' or 'Win or Lose' will imply that you may seek to 'dominate' others in your communications. This style of communication is more often perceived as aggressive, bullish and/or forceful by others. This style of communication more often does not meet with the best results or overall intended outcomes.

ASSERTIVENESS RIGHTS

- ✓ Assertive behaviour encourages confidence and a level of self-esteem that is often lacking if other behaviours predominate.
- ✓ Assertive behaviour can help re-buff aggressive behaviour and thereby decrease stress.
- ✓ Assertive behaviour can help us avoid deception through manipulation and it helps in making choices.
- ✓ Assertive behaviour means stating what you mean clearly and acknowledging that others have rights too.

PERSONAL RIGHTS FOR ASSERTIVENESS

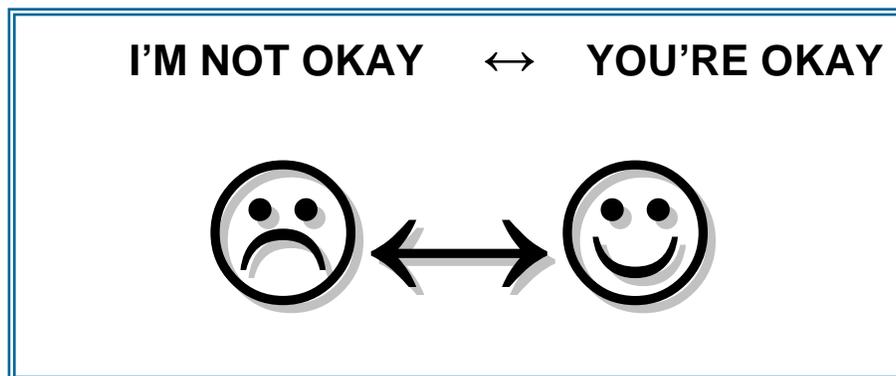
There are also assertiveness guidelines for our everyday personal lives and communications. Some of these are as follows. Remember, these are everyone else's rights as well.

I have the right ...

- ✓ To state that my only needs and set my own priorities as a person independent of any roles that I me assume in my life.

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- ✓ To be treated with respect as an intelligent, capable and equal human being.
- ✓ To express my feelings.
- ✓ To express my own opinions and values.
- ✓ To say yes or no for myself.
- ✓ To make mistakes.
- ✓ To change my mind.
- ✓ To say 'I don't understand'.
- ✓ To ask for what I want.
- ✓ To decline responsibility for other peoples problems.
- ✓ To deal with others without being dependent on them for approval.
- ✓ To choose not to assert myself.
- ✓ To be myself.



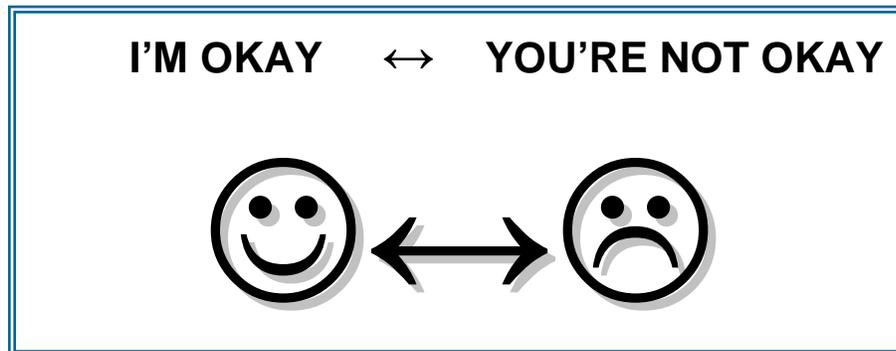
SUBMISSIVE/PASSIVE/NON-ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR

For instance, this is not saying what you want, going along with others to keep the peace or to be liked. This is all so if you are agreeing to things that you don't want to do without negotiating and accepting them resentfully, perhaps complaining behind the scenes. Non-assertive behaviour is when you fail to stand up for your rights and in doing so other people easily disregard them and/or fail to respect them. A non-assertive person withdraws from expressing their opinions, needs, wants or feelings. If they do so, they may express them apologetically and/or not honestly.

This behaviour rarely enables the person to make decisions either for themselves or for others. They are easily bullied and they avoid responsibility. The submissive person will usually agree with what others decide.

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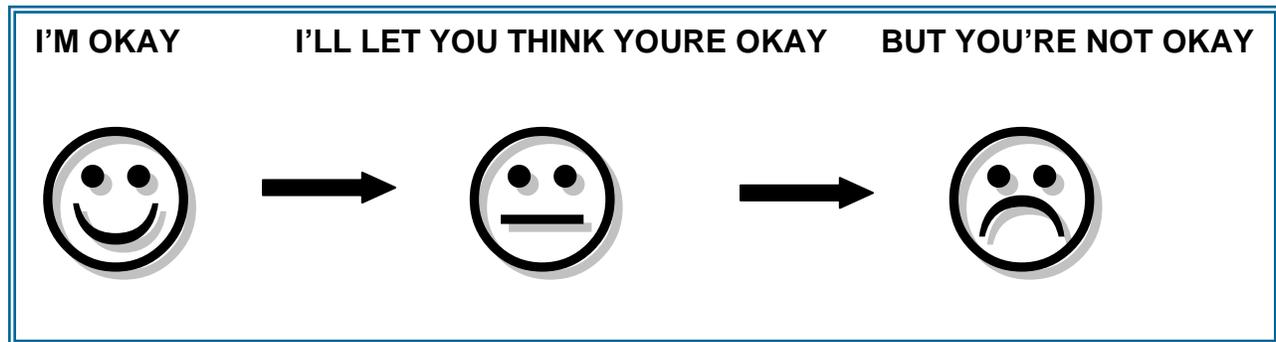
AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR



This is for instance, being pushy, trying to force others into doing things your way, not listening, giving orders when it is inappropriate, deciding for others, blaming and attacking. This behaviour is far more direct to a point of being orally dominating and forceful. In this case the person will make a stand for their rights, but in such a way that the rights of other people are violated. They will ignore or dismiss the opinions, needs, wants and/or feelings of others. They may also express their opinions, needs, wants or feelings in inappropriate ways. Their internal programming and assumptions are that their opinions, needs, wants, beliefs or feelings are more valid or important than other people. In general this person will not regard the rights of another person and may feel that that they have little or nothing to contribute. An individual displaying aggressive behaviour may make a decision for the whole group, will use the indecisiveness of a passive person to their advantage and will put down suggestions made by other group members.

MANIPULATIVE BEHAVIOUR/INDIRECT AGGRESSION

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This is for instance conning others into doing things that *you* want, being 'two-faced', saying one thing and meaning another, sarcasm, appearing to acknowledge and respect others whilst really putting them down. This behaviour can also be aggressive but not in such an overt and direct manner. This person can be manipulative and/or devious and will use a number of strategies to get his or her own way for example; "cinemas make me feel ill. If you choose to see a film I will go home so as not to spoil your fun." This person will often engage the sympathy of the easily manipulated passive type.

You may know people who display these traits but it is rare for an individual to fall neatly into one behaviour category. We tend to be a mixture of two or three or even all of these characteristics although one behavioural pattern may dominate. Despite this, everyone can develop skills of assertion and therefore increase self-confidence, raise self-esteem, improve communications, and reduce stress.

HOW TO BE ASSERTIVE

Strategies to be assertive:

1. **Decide what you want** - This is important or others will be confused including yourself. This is especially necessary if you are making or have made a complaint.
2. **Say what you want clearly and specifically** - Assertive clarity helps to create balance.
3. **Support what you say, why and how you say it** – The tone of voice *and* body language must match the words themselves. Mixed messages are confusing and ineffective.

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4. **Do not be manipulated or sidetracked** – Say what you want and stick to the first point. Deal with other issues later. If you are in a meeting it may help you to make notes that will support you in keeping to your point. This can also help you gain clarity.
5. **Listen to the other person** – remember that others have a right to their point of view. The backbone to communication and resolution is often about listening to others.
6. **Aim for a 'win-win' situation** – Being assertive is not about getting what you want all of the time. Two brains working cooperatively on a problem are more likely to achieve a compromise so that *both* parties get something they want.

Like any new skill, learning to act and communicate effectively may take some work and, of course, time and practice. As with anything new, expect to feel 'weird' when you decide to become assertive and change the patterns you have been running. Also consider that others (your colleagues, manager or partner) will feel weird too. If dealing with particularly bullying types, they will generally be motivated to act so as to reassert the old comfortable pattern. The dominating personality may try to "up the ante" and try coming on even stronger so as to try to re-gain power over the situation as you revert back to being passive and/or submissive. If you can stand your ground for a while, you will have begun to set your boundaries firmly in place and both of you will get used to the new pattern of you being assertive. However, to be successful at this, you need to be committed to affecting a change in your own behaviour.

The correct understanding and use of assertiveness is an invaluable skill that will enable you to communicate effectively and produce the best results for you and others. In return, this will help to handle and/or decrease stress in our work environment.

COMMUNICATION & ASSERTIVENESS

Unfortunately, a great deal of stress in the workplace is due to poor communication.

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QUESTION: (Hmmm...Something to think about...)

- ❑ *How often have you said “Yes” when inside you really wanted to say “No”?*
- ❑ *How often have you found that someone has totally misunderstood what you were trying to say?*

It is this lack of the ability to communicate assertively that is often the culprit. People who are not assertive can experience considerable stress in their dealings with other people. It is important to also note that aggressive communications rarely produces the end results that the communicator desires. This is especially true in the long-term.

GROUP TASK: (Discuss)

1. What are some of the effects that non-assertive behaviour can have on an individual?
2. What are some of the effects that non-assertive behaviour can have on others (colleagues & managers)?
3. What are some of the effects that non-assertive behaviour can have on your organisation?

GROUP TASK: (Discuss)

1. What are some of the effects that aggressive behaviour can have on others (colleagues & staff)?
2. What are some of the effects that aggressive behaviour can have on an organisation?

GROUP TASK: (Discuss)

1. What are your fears and concerns regarding becoming assertive in the work place?
2. What could be the benefits of becoming assertive in the work place?

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BREAKING IT DOWN – THE UNDERLYING ISSUES



So far, we have talked a lot about assertive and non-assertive behaviour, distinguishing the patterns and traits. However, as with all coaching programmes it is important to unravel the underlying issues, which lead to non-assertive behaviour.

The root of non-assertive behaviours and aggressive behaviours (yes, that's right) lies in low self-esteem. Although these words are frequently used within the 'self help' sector, it is very important to gain a grass roots understanding of what they imply.

(Note: Some aggressive behaviour is due to very very high self esteem. Self esteem that is too high normally leads to bullying behaviour (i.e. I know I am right so you will do as I say)

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

In a simple sense, you can think of self-esteem as your '*sense of worth*'. That is to say, your self-esteem is about your *self-regard and how you feel about yourself*. Your self esteem embraces you're:

- Self image
- Self perception and opinion
- Self confidence
- Self respect
- Self acceptance

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Our self-esteem is all about how we judge and evaluate ourselves. It deals with our central belief system about who you are and your core ideas about the type of person you feel that you are. It is however, important to note that low self-esteem can also be the result of other external factors such as trauma, poor health, accidents and disaster etc. However, low self-esteem (as with good self-esteem) is most commonly the result of repeated programming by external factors, your experiences and by yourself. This is to say that this programming may have come directly or indirectly in all sorts of ways since our childhood and upbringing.

Often, self-esteem is connected to national identity – the idiosyncrasy of one's environment. For instance, in the UK many individuals will recognise having dealt with issues of low self-esteem. Historically, the national identity of the UK is to be overtly polite, apologetic, to speak when spoken to with restraints on self-expression. We often joke about the army term 'Stiff upper lip!' yet this is part of our national identity, of which may lead to individual issues of inhibition, lack of self-confidence and challenges in the area of communication.

Our concept of self can be linked to the following categories:

- National identity** (I am British, American etc.)
- Social/Cultural identity** (I am a Londoner)
- Gender identity** (I am a man, I am a woman)
- Life stage identity** (I am a student, I am a mother, I am an old age pensioner)
- Physical identity** (I am tall, I am short, I am black, I am white etc.)
- Regular activities/career** (I am a teacher, a manager, I play football, etc.)

Other programmes may have been installed through our society, the media, teachers, family, friends, but most importantly they are installed *and re-enforced* by our thoughts and ourselves. From the moment we are adults, we do have a choice concerning which programmes we are running.

The great news is that no matter our programming, if our self-esteem is low, we can take direct responsibility by working on and changing this for the better.

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Improving ones self-esteem is both empowering and has positive follow through effects on our communications and working environments.

GROUP TASK 1: (Discuss & explain): Think of examples of people you may have met or know, answer the following questions.

- **What does low self-esteem look like?**
- **How do we identify it?** (Language, behaviour, physiology, results etc.)
- **What impact could low self esteem have on an individual?** (Consider all areas of life and work)
- **What effect could low self-esteem have on;**
 - a) others
 - b) your work environment?

MANAGING THE MIND



WHAT ARE BELIEFS?

Beliefs are the building blocks of our lives and our life experiences. Your self-esteem is founded on your beliefs. These beliefs are about yourself. Beliefs are not really ultimate truths. Instead, beliefs are thoughts and ideas that we no longer question. They are opinions that you have formed and *decided* are true.

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You have supported these beliefs with certain/chosen facts and feedback from your life. The facts that you have chosen and/or decided to hold in place are legs to the tabletop of your beliefs. The facts that you have *chosen*, support your beliefs. Beliefs then are ideas that you have committed to and that you support. All our actions are as a direct result of our beliefs. Our beliefs shape the direction of our lives and so we should pay them serious attention. We can choose our beliefs and should a belief no longer serve us, we can adapt by choosing another.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT OPINION ANYONE CAN HOLD
IS THEIR OPINION OF THEMSELVES.**

Anthony Robbins

Your beliefs are positions that you endorse and they are your way of expressing your attitude. It is your beliefs that support and maintain your way of thinking and looking at things. In total then, your beliefs support your approach and outlook on life and therefore your interaction within your environment.

DICTIONARY DEFINITION

BELIEF: A principal accepted as true or real. An opinion or conviction (trust or confidence in)

A belief is the psychological state in which an individual holds a [proposition](#) or [premise](#) to be [true](#).

(Wikipedia)

It is important to understand about beliefs, as it is our beliefs about [ourselves](#) that shape our identity and so our self-esteem. When developing assertiveness, it becomes necessary for us to take responsibility for the programmes that we are running, which could be affecting our self-esteem. By doing so, we are more able

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to take control over the unsupportive beliefs that we are holding about ourselves (which are not ultimate truths). In this way, by cultivating a more positive relationship with ourselves, we create a more positive self-image in connection to ourselves and therefore, with our external environment. *Discarding negative mental talk about ones self and finding new and supportive self-beliefs will have to be supported by facts that you can find in your life.* **Maintaining high self-esteem relies on positive self talk.** As your self talk improves you will find that you are better able to make decisions, communicate your needs and ideas, trust and share your own opinions and speak for yourself ultimately resulting in the growth of your self-confidence the total of which are associated with having good self esteem.

UNDERSTANDING WORK STANDARDS

There are always a set of common work standards expected of us once we are employed. We are expected to be well presented, well spoken, to have good time keeping and attendance.

GROUP TASK- Discuss:

1. **What do you think is meant by good attendance?**
2. **Give an example of when you have demonstrated good attendance.**
3. **What do you think is meant by good time keeping?**

GROUP TASK- Discuss:

- a) Describe what is meant by good timekeeping and give an example of when you demonstrated good time timekeeping.
- b) Think about a time when you have arranged to meet someone at a certain time and they have not turned up or they have kept you waiting around. How did it make you feel?
- c) Sometimes things beyond our control might happen that could make us late for work. What do you think is the best and correct line of action in such cases?

WRAPPING IT UP WITH THE COACH

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Communicating assertively is the best way to work harmoniously and support self-confidence in order to work to higher standards and goals.

Kayo Anosike

The ideas, practices and exercises in this handbook have been created to support and develop your skills in being assertive and communicating harmoniously. Please remember that you need to take this advice and package it up into something that suits your style, your personality, your working culture and your comfort zone.