

Tools2Thrive — Anger

Styles of Communication

There are a range of communication styles that different people use at different times. Some are more effective and appropriate than others depending on the situation. The three most common are passive, aggressive and assertive communication.

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You prioritize the needs of others over your own.• You go along with what other people want you to do.• You don't express or make known your needs or desires.• You may find it difficult to say "no" to someone.• You fear people in authority.• You can't stand criticism. <p>This style of communication can mean that you don't feel listened to by others. You might feel that you are walked over. If such a pattern builds up, then people may not expect to hear your opinion; they can become used to ignoring you. You may end up accepting work or favors despite feeling that they may be unfair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You prioritize your needs above the needs of others.• You're always forcing your point through.• You can't stand not getting your own way.• You ignore other people and do not listen to their opinions and expressed needs. <p>This can be a confrontational style of communication, which can lead to alienation. People may feel that they do not enjoy being with you because you do not take their opinions into consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You try to balance your own needs against the needs of others.• You take time to listen to other people's point of view.• You express a preference before negotiating in a polite and constructive fashion.• You believe that everyone should have an opportunity to express their needs.• You have respect for yourself and respect for other people. <p>Being assertive involves being aware of your own needs and expressing them with confidence. Your attitude and approach should be calm, confident and considerate. Being assertive is about achieving an appropriate balance between the two extreme communication styles. It can be hard to be assertive, especially if you feel anxious or intimidated by a situation. It may help to practice particular techniques and strategies.</p>

Techniques and Strategies

You may find it more difficult to communicate in certain situations. For example, at work, with a member of the opposite sex, or with those in authority. It may be helpful to rehearse or role-play different scenarios. This can help you gain confidence in difficult situations.

Here are some helpful tips on being assertive: Communicate succinctly. Maintain appropriate eye contact. Be polite but firm. Keep a calm, relaxed tone of voice and body posture.

You may feel nervous going into a difficult situation. Practicing specific strategies can help you feel more prepared. You might also find the use of relaxation techniques to be helpful.

"I" Statements

You may be unhappy about someone's behavior. It's best to communicate to them how you feel about the situation. This tells the other person how you feel and paves the way for a helpful discussion of the situation. This is different from a "you" message, which attacks or accuses the other person.

Imagine this situation:

You had cooked a meal several evenings on the run. Each time, your partner or roommate arrived late, and the dinner had been spoiled.



Calmly saying: *"I get very upset when you arrive late for dinner. I put a lot of energy into making it. I feel that it's a waste if the food is cold or overdone."*

Rather than: *"You're always late for dinner. You're selfish and inconsiderate. You can make your own dinner from now on."*

Broken Record

This can be useful with strangers when you have a specific task. For example, when taking something back to the store. It consists simply of repeating your point several times, no matter how the other person tries to divert you.

Imagine this situation: Taking a pair of trousers back to the store.



Customer: *"I'd like to return these trousers because they've got a mark on them."*

Sales Clerk: *"Hmm...well, it's only a small mark. It will probably wash off."*

Customer: *"I'd still like them changed, please."*

Sales Clerk: *"We don't have any more of that size in stock."*

Customer: *"I would like a replacement pair, please."*

Sales Clerk: *"OK, we'll reorder them. They should be in by the end of the week."*

Taking criticism

It can be difficult to listen to criticisms. It is a chance to learn about yourself as others see you. Helpful criticism can be very useful. This is very different to negative insults. Try simply listening to what is being said. Check that you understand their comments by repeating them back in your own words. You might not immediately agree with what has been said. It is important to stand your ground but not become defensive.



Aurora 24/7 Helpline 480.345.5420

Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK

Trans Lifeline 877.565.8860

Arizona Crisis Line 800.631.1314

Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 (press 1)

Poison Control 800.222.1222