



The Salvation Army
**POSITIVE LIFESTYLE
PROGRAM**



Assertiveness

Assertiveness

Aim: to look at the ways we behave in particular situations and learn when to be assertive.

Each person is responsible for their own behaviour, thoughts and feelings. At times, we may allow others to determine how we act and react. There are things that we can do to help us gain control and take responsibility back for reaching our own needs and goals.

Whether you are responding to someone else's behaviour, or beginning some action for yourself, here are three options on how you choose to act or react. These include:

1. passive behaviour,
2. aggressive behaviour
3. assertive behaviour.

Right to be assertive

Rights are what we are all entitled to and are central to assertive behaviour. We all have the right to be assertive. To be assertive is to stand up for yourself, but not abuse someone else's rights. If you are clear about your own rights and those of others, then you will find it easier to decide whether someone is trampling on your rights.



Personal bill of rights

The right to hold and express your opinions, views
and ideas freely.

The right to have your own opinions, views and ideas listened to.

The right to be human and take full responsibility
for your own decisions and actions.

The right to ask (but not demand) so that others
can respond to your needs and wants.

The right to say 'no' without feeling guilty or selfish.

The right to have feelings and to express them.

The right to make mistakes.

The right to ask for help.

The right to have others respect your rights.

The right to say 'I don't know' or 'I don't understand'.

The right to be asked about decisions that affect you.

Are there any other rights which you feel should be added to this list?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

The personal Bill of Rights is for everyone - remember, others have these rights too!

Assertiveness questionnaire

Here is an opportunity to find out how assertive you are. Complete the questionnaire. You may be surprised by how effective you already are as an assertive communicator. Read each statement carefully before ticking (✓) the response appropriate for you.

Do you find it easy to:	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
1. Express your feelings			
2. Receive a compliment			
3. Talk when all eyes are on you			
4. Say 'no' when you want to			
5. Control your temper in an argument			
6. Respond to undeserved criticism			
7. Speak up when you are dissatisfied with a service or product			
8. Ask friends for small favours or help			
9. Disagree with others			
10. Tell your friends when they have upset or ignored you			
11. Refuse a lift with a friend who has been drinking or taking drugs			
12. Admit that you were wrong or that you didn't know			
13. Do what feels right to you against the advice of others			

Do you find it easy to:	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
14. Remind a good friend who owes you money to pay it back			
15. Speak up if disturbed by a stranger smoking / vaping near you			
Totals:			

How did you score?

The scores from your questionnaire will indicate how assertive you are. Total your score for each response and check your score with the description below.

‘Usually’ 10 or more

If you answered ‘usually’ to 10 or more questions, you are probably an assertive person. You know your rights and are not afraid to express your thoughts and feelings. Keep up the good work. However, it is still important that you review the material in this session in order to enhance the skills you already possess.

‘Usually’ less than 10 (but more than 5)

If you have scored within this range, you probably have experienced some difficulty in being assertive in the past. You know your rights, but can be afraid to express your thoughts and feelings. Read this session carefully so that you are able to develop appropriate skills to enhance your assertiveness.

Mostly ‘Rarely’, (less than 5 ‘usually’) or, a mixture of ‘sometimes’ and ‘rarely’

If you have scored within this range, this session will give you some helpful advice on how to unearth those hidden assertiveness skills. Read the session thoroughly so that you are able to discover the skills of being a more assertive person.

Case studies

The following section looks at ways to be assertive when:

1. Saying 'No'
2. Asking for help
3. Expressing anger
4. Giving and receiving compliments
5. Setting Boundaries

1. Saying 'No'

If you don't want to do something, you don't have to do it. Saying 'no' doesn't mean you are selfish and don't feel you have to give a reason. Be direct in responding and feel free to compromise.

Helpful phrases for saying 'No'

- I can't give you an answer right now, will you check back with me? I want to, but I'm not able.
- I'm not able to commit to that right now.
- I really appreciate you asking me, but I can't do it.
- I understand you really need my help, but I'm just not able to say yes to that. I'm going to say no for now. I'll let you know if something changes.
- I'm honoured that you would ask me, but my answer is no. No, I can't do that, but here is what I can do.
- I just don't have that to give right now.

(Julie de Azevedo Hanks The Burnout Cure 2013)

Exercise: Someone has asked you to take them to an appointment and You have other commitments.

When do you tell them you will not be able to do it? _____

How do you tell them (in person, text, by phone)? _____

What will you say? _____

