

Assertive Communication

Expressing needs and limits clearly without collapsing into passivity or escalating into aggression.

Three common styles

- Passive: needs are minimized or left unspoken.
- Aggressive: the goal becomes winning, punishing, or controlling.
- Assertive: the message is direct, respectful, and specific while allowing the other person to have their own response.

A simple structure

- Describe the situation without exaggeration.
- State your feeling or concern without mind reading.
- Ask clearly for what you want or state your boundary.
- Explain why it matters when helpful.
- Stay focused rather than adding every past grievance.

Example

“When plans change at the last minute, I feel stressed because I have already arranged my schedule. Please tell me as soon as you know there may be a change.”

Try this reflection

What is one request you have been hoping someone would infer instead of stating directly?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.