

Assertiveness Workshop

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Learning Objectives

- To understand assertive communication and how it can be used in professional and everyday settings
- To share your opinions more confidently
- To better equip you in handling confrontation and conflict

Introductions

- Your name
- Your UCL department
- Your definition of assertiveness

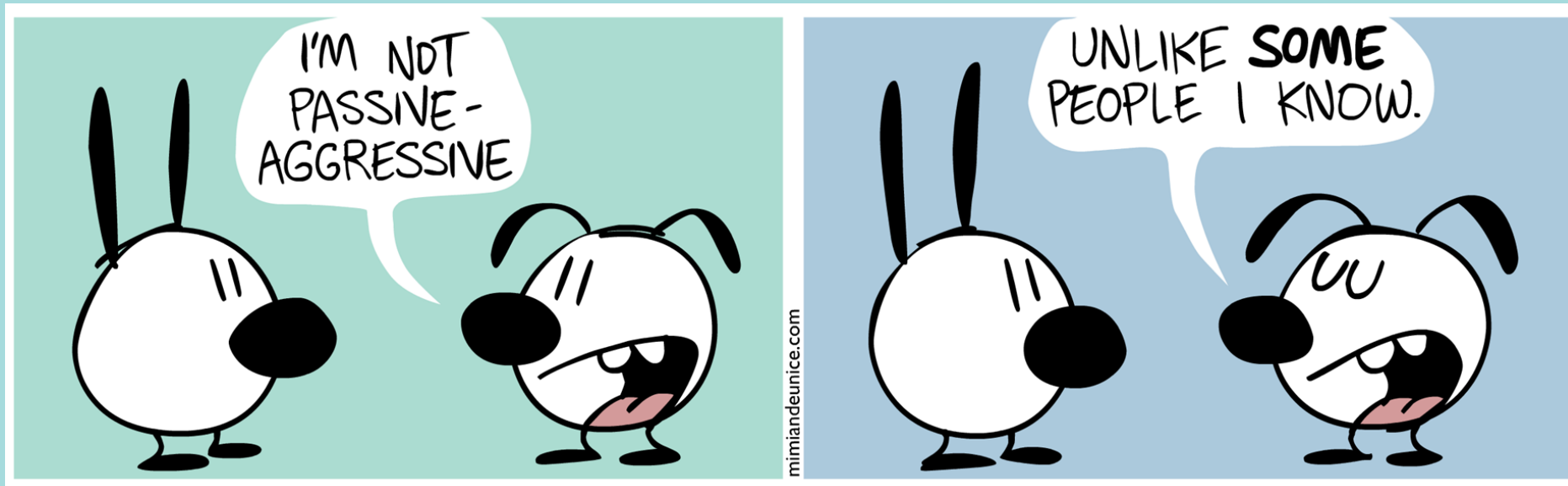


Assertiveness:

Assertiveness IS a style of open and honest communication. It recognises that you are in charge of your own behaviour.

Assertiveness is NOT a personality type. It is also NOT a strategy for getting your own way.

Other communication styles



Exercise 1:

With a partner discuss the following:

I get most *passive* when _____

I'm already *assertive* when _____

I often become *aggressive* when _____

My biggest *fear* of being assertive _____

Sharing your opinion

- You are willing to express your opinion whether or not others have done so.
- You take ownership of your opinion 'my own view is....'
- If someone disagrees you are willing to discuss the issue, but you don't necessarily feel that it is your mission to change their mind.



Important points:

- Relax and rehearse
- Don't signal a lack of confidence. If you are undecided, say so. If you feel strongly say so.
- Use 'I' statements
- Don't intimidate
- If someone challenges your opinion you can choose whether or not to defend it.

Exercise 2: Opinion Exchange

Should UCL move to a GPA system?

Where is the best place to live in the UK?

Should human cloning be allowed?

Which UK university is best?

Should students support the planned marking boycott?

Select an issue from the list above or create your own.

Think about your opinion on this issue. Your goal is to *present your point of view clearly* (neither passively nor aggressively)-- not to get your partner's approval.

Observer: Listen attentively. Avoid nodding, smiling, or showing agreement or disagreement.

Body Language/ non verbal communication



Dealing with Confrontation

Confrontation is difficult because people can become anxious, feel threatened, feel angry.

Complexity of the conflict is dependent on relationship and issue.

Exercise 3: Considering your confrontation

Write down a brief description of the conflict.
Who does it involve? What is the issue?

1. Focus on the issue not on your reaction to it. Note specific observable behaviours or events.

Exercise 3: Preparing for confrontation

2. Write a script:

Could you emphasise the positives?

Describe: define the situation; what's going on?

Express: state your emotions; use 'I' statements;

Specify: specify what you would like to happen; focus on behaviour

Outcome: describe the outcome that will follow in terms of feelings or results

3. **Choose an appropriate time & place:** No one likes to be embarrassed

Exercise 3: Dealing with confrontation

- 4. Relax:** The calmer you are the more effective you will be at communicating
- 5. Watch your non-verbal communication:** What will you need to concentrate on?
- 6. Avoid absolute statements:** They can derail constructive discussion
- 7. Don't try to win**

Assertiveness is:

To be there.

Not to be perfect. To expose our flaws, our irrational emotions and opinions, our strange preferences, our incomprehensible dreams, our unaccountable tastes, and our all too human selves to others. Not so that others will bow down to us or hide themselves from us but in a way that invites others to be there as well. A way that acknowledges the right of everyone to be every bit as irrational, flawed, and human as we are.

Tips:

- One of the best sources of feedback is yourself. Rehearse in front of a mirror
- Practice being slightly outside of your comfort zone
- Sign up to UCL's Psychological Services Assertiveness Workshops

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/personal-development-workshops/workshops>

