

<p style="text-align: center;">Week 15: Handout A COMMUNICATION TYPES</p>

COMMUNICATION TYPES: WHICH ONE DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH?

The Basics: Every time we speak, we choose and use one of four basic communication types: **assertive, aggressive, passive** and **passive-aggressive**.

Assertive Communication: The most effective and healthiest form of communication is the assertive style. It's how we naturally express ourselves when our self-esteem is intact, giving us the confidence to communicate without games and manipulation.

When we are being assertive, we work hard to create mutually satisfying solutions. We communicate our needs clearly and forthrightly. We care about the relationship and strive for a win/win situation. We know our limits and refuse to be pushed beyond them just because someone else wants or needs something from us. Surprisingly, assertive is the style most people use least.

Aggressive Communication: Aggressive communication always involves manipulation. We may attempt to make people do what we want by inducing guilt (hurt) or by using intimidation and control tactics (anger). Basically, we simply want our needs met - and right now! Although there are a few arenas where aggressive behavior is called for (i.e., sports or war), it will never work in a relationship. Ironically, the more aggressive sports rely heavily on team members and rational coaching strategies.

Passive Communication: Passive communication is based on compliance and hopes to avoid confrontation at all costs. In this mode we do not talk much, question even less, and actually do very little. We just do not want to rock the boat. Passives have learned that it is safer not to react and better to disappear than to stand up and be noticed.

Passive-Aggressive Communication: A combination of styles, passive-aggressive avoids direct confrontation (passive), but attempts to get even through manipulation (aggressive). If you have ever thought about making that certain someone who needs to be "taught a thing or two" suffer (even just a teeny bit), you have stepped pretty close to (if not on into) the devious and sneaky world of passive-aggressive communication.

So now what?

Clearly, for many reasons, the only **healthy communication type is assertive communication**. Surely you can identify many people in your own life that favor each of the four types. Most of us use a combination of these four styles, depending on the person or situation. The styles we choose generally depend on what our past experiences have taught us will work best to get our needs met in each specific situation. If you take a really good look at yourself, you have probably used each throughout your lifetime

Understanding the four basic types of communication will help you learn how to react most effectively when confronted with a difficult person. It will also help you recognize when you are using manipulative behavior to get your own needs met. Remember, you always have a choice as to which communication style you use. If you are serious about taking control of your life, you need to practice being more assertive. It will help you diffuse anger, reduce guilt and build relationships - both personally and professionally.

Take Action! Begin to pay attention to which communication styles you use throughout the day. How often do you use a communication style other than assertive?

Watch and identify the communication styles some of the difficult people in your life use. Can you begin to notice how others use manipulative techniques to get their way?

<p style="text-align: center;">Week 15: Handout B PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS</p>
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- 1) The primary purpose for learning communication skills is to become active rather than reactive in your relationships. Describe the difference between a reactive response to your partner and an active response.
- 2) Vulnerability—particularly making yourself known to others—is fundamental to relationship building. Telling someone that s/he would know what you're thinking if s/he truly loved you is unfair. No one is a "mind reader." What we value and care about is only known by another if we talk openly about ourselves.
- 3) Communication skills, used honestly, are tools for showing love and care for another person. Open and honest communication helps us "humanize" each other.
- 4) Communication skills are powerful tools and, as with all form of power, can be abused. Abuse happens when these skills become means of attempting to produce certain responses in others rather than means of reflecting and clarifying what is really true for and about you.
- 5) These skills are neither easy nor generally part of our talk "habits." They can become, however, keys to greater understanding of one another, means of reducing tensions and integral to our desire to care for and grow together.

<p style="text-align: center;">Week 15: Handout C USE OF "I" STATEMENTS</p>

The use of "I" statements are useful in healthy relationships for two reasons:

- It helps be more aware of myself by pushing me to take responsibility for my thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- It enables others to get to know more about me directly and honestly.

"You" statements tend not to facilitate positive communication because:

- They tend to be blaming and provoke defensive reactions.
- They tend to be labeling and over-generalizing.
- They tend not to give direct information about ourselves: therefore, people have to assume our meanings.

Notice the difference between the following pairs of statements:

- "You are nice."
- "I really like you."

And

- "You are a jerk."
- "I feel disappointed and hurt when you are late for our date."

Guidelines:

- Begin statements with "I" not "You."
- Saying "I: think you are..." isn't useful. It is a hidden "you" statement. Using "because" is also blaming. Own your anger.

<p style="text-align: center;">Week 15: Handout D PURPOSE-STATING STEMS</p>

Introduction:

Making our purposes (or goals) known in clear, straight-forward terms helps others care for us. Often we are only vaguely aware of our own purposes. Taking time to think them through in order to be able to tell them to another helps us be in touch with our own purposes. As with all open communication, straight-forward language carries some risk. We risk who we are by stating our purposes clearly to another. Yet we also approach the possibility of a genuinely loving, caring, responsible relationship with another. Rather than playing guessing games—which often lead to hurt feelings, misunderstandings or arguments—we attempt honesty and clarity.

Purpose-stating Stems:

My purpose is.....

What I am trying to do....

What I am hoping for is....

What I want to accomplish....

My intention is to....

Activity: How might you use purpose-statements to more clearly talk to a friend about why you aren't able to spend more time with him/her since you've started attending DV group?