



Being assertive means:

- Standing up for yourself and your rights.
- Feeling comfortable when you honestly let your feelings and opinions be known.
- Acting in your own best interest while showing respect for yourself and others.

Being aggressive (opposite to assertive) means:

- Standing up for your rights while violating another's.
- Expressing your feelings in a way that hurts another.
- Achieving what you want at the expense of others.

At times, it is difficult to assert ourselves with others. Here are some ways to act and respond assertively:

- Try starting a conversation or planning an activity with others.
- If someone criticizes or puts you down, respond to what he/she said in clear language. Use "I" statements (for example, *"I do not like that"*.)
- Make goals for yourself and defend your right to achieve them.
- Look people in the eye and hold your head up.
- Be honest and direct when you express your needs. Do not manipulate. State clearly what it is you need and want rather than staying silent and looking angry.
- Know that your thoughts and feelings matter. Do not be afraid to express them.
- Say *"no"* to extra work or responsibilities if you have too many other things to do.
- Show your anger or disappointment in a way that does not hurt others. For example say, *"I am angry and upset that we can not go out"*, rather than *"I am mad at you and hate you"*.
- Show respect for yourself and for others in your actions and words.