



**ThedaCare™**

**Assertive  
Communication/Conflict  
Resolution In Dealing With  
Different People**

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# The Passive Communicator

- Often complain and feel they are being treated unfairly. Allows others to make decisions and says nothing when they disagree. Anger and resentment builds.
- May pout if they don't get what they want, but don't say what they want. They often feel like a victim.

*Try:*

*Not to be their protector. Ask them for suggestions to improve the situation. Allow them to practice giving positive ideas. They have a high need for approval.*

# The Shrinking Violet

- Seems to have nothing to contribute and is difficult to draw out
- Will go along with anything just to gain approval
- Does not appear interested in being part of the “team”

*Try:*

*Not to nag them to open up. Ask open-ended questions.  
To be patient in waiting for a response. Reinforce  
their positive contributions.*

# Passive-Aggressive

- **Sarcastic. Uses words as weapons. Insults veiled as a joke. Destroys harmony in a group.**
- **Indirect, based on revenge or punishing.**
- **Unexplained actions. Passive resistance.**

*Try:*

*Don't let them get away with the behavior. Address the behavior openly and directly with objectivity.*

# The Excuse Maker

- **Everyone else is at fault. Transfers blame.**
- **Avoids responsibility**

*Try:*

*To pinpoint exactly what they are upset about.*

*Use “I” messages. Get good as saying,  
“Thanks for letting me know what you’re  
feeling.”*

# The Cynics and Nay-sayers

- **We've tried that before. It'll never work.**
- **Does not like change. Fear exposure of shortcomings. Ego-don't like it because they did not think of it first.**

*Try:*

*To ask for their support or input. Stick to discussing behaviors, not attitudes. Find something good about them. Find areas of agreement.*

# Aggressive

- **Based on lashing out. Attacking (verbal, physical, intimidation, threatening). Manipulation through fear.**
- **Don't care about other's needs or feelings.**
- **My way or no way. Attempts to regain control by taking power away from others.**

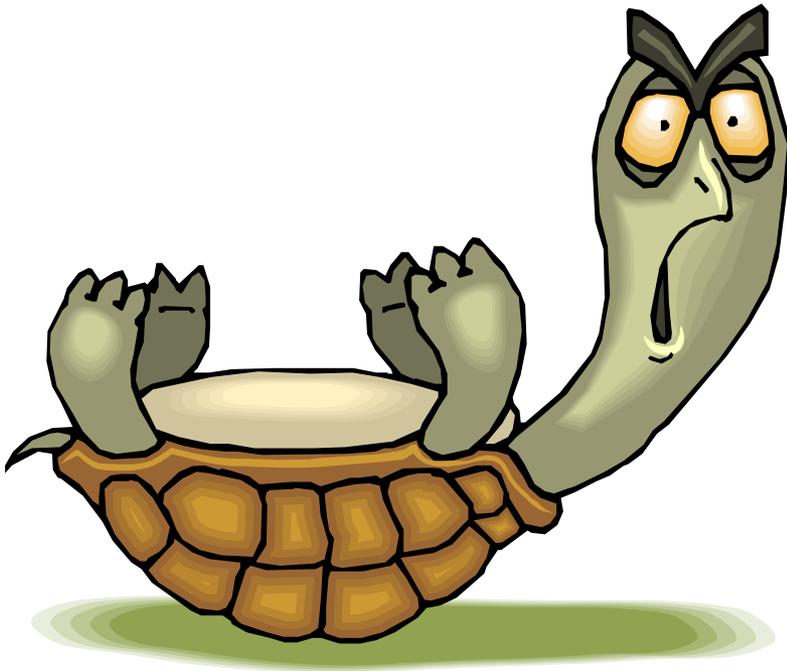
*Try:*

*A non-defensive response. Stay calm. Do not respond to personal attacks. Establish consequences for aggressive behavior.*

# Others???

- **The Chatty Neighbor**
- **The Best Friend (too much information)**
- **The Mole**

# All the psychology you need to know. . .



- People who behave in ways that makes them “difficult” usually feel out of control.
- Most of their behavior is an attempt to get control.
- Everyone has the need for power, approval, inclusion, justice and esteem.

# What Makes Someone “Difficult”?

- **The majority of our behaviors are learned through our interaction with others.**
- **We try certain behaviors and are either rewarded or punished.**
- **We continue the behaviors for which we perceive a reward.**
- **Remember that “difficult” is in the eye of the beholder.**

# Try to remind yourself:

- Not to psychoanalyze the person.
- To move beyond *rightness* and *wrongness*.
- Work on changing your response, *not* their behavior.



# How Do We Communicate?

# **Five Most Influential Non-verbal Behaviors**

- **Smiling**
- **Touching (gently and appropriately)**
- **Affirmative head nods**
- **Immediacy behaviors (hand shake)**
- **Direct eye contact**

# Choose Your Response

- Be proactive rather than reactive.
- Your response will affect the other person's behavior.
- Choose the behaviors that help the “difficult” person behave more appropriately.
- What can YOU do to make things better?
- Use the ***Basic Principles***

# Basic Principles

- **Focus on the situation, issue or behavior, not the person.**
- **Maintain the self-esteem and self-confidence of others.**
- **Maintain constructive relationships.**
- **Take the initiative to make things better.**
- **Lead by example.**

# Assertive Communication

- **Assertiveness is the ability to honestly express your opinions, feelings, attitudes and rights, without undue anxiety in a way that doesn't infringe on the rights of others.**
- **The middle ground between bully and doormat.**

# Why is Assertiveness Important?

- **If you don't know how to be assertive, you might experience:**
  - Depression from anger turned inward, a sense of helplessness, no control
  - Resentment of others for manipulating you
  - Frustration at situation or self
  - Temper-Anger builds up
  - Anxiety which leads to avoidance
  - Poor relations-expecting others to mind-read
  - Physical Problems
  - Parenting Problems

# Standard Rules Of Engagement

- Listen cooperatively – engaged
- Open to perception – don't worry about intent
- No personal attacks
- Take notes to focus on what the person is saying – develop a different tool for distraction
- Ask clarifying questions
- Walk away with all questions answered
- Have an action plan
- Schedule regular follow-up conferences

# How to be Assertive

- **Body Language**

- Face the other person
- Stand or sit straight
- Don't use dismissive gestures
- Be pleasant but serious
- Keep voice calm and soft, not whiney or abrasive

- **Make clear, direct requests**

- “Will you please?” versus “Would you mind?”
- “Please make five copies of this for my meeting.” versus “I need five copies of this for my meeting.”

# How to be Assertive (con't)

- **Use “I” statements.**
  - “I’d like to tell my stories without interruption” versus “You’re always interrupting me”
- **Use facts not judgments**
  - “Mr. Smith’s call light has been on for 20 minutes” versus “You are not being attentive to your patient’s needs”

# How to be Assertive (con't)

- **Express ownership of your thoughts, feelings and opinions.**
  - “I get angry when he breaks his promises” versus “He makes me angry”
  - “I think tabling this discussion will allow us time to gather more data” versus “Don’t you think we should table this for now?”

# Skills to Learn

- **Don't take it personally**
  - One of the hardest skills to learn
- **Skillful listening**
  - Stop talking
  - Concentrate on what the person is saying
  - Look for the meaning behind the words
  - Provide feedback, paraphrase, ask open-ended questions, clarify

# Skills to Learn

- **Stay Calm**
  - Use a controlled, even tone of voice
  - Express empathy
  - Listen first, speak last
  - Maintain your professionalism
- **Use Non-defensive Language**
  - Assertiveness skills
  - Avoid beginning a sentence with “you”. Try “I” or “we”
  - Ask for details and facts (How, When, Where)

# Skills to Learn

- **Apologize**
  - Accept responsibility for the problem without blaming others
  - Make no excuses
  - Explain how things normally happen
- **Develop cooperation**

# Wrap Up

- **Final Thoughts**
- **Questions**
- **Evaluation**