



COMMUNICATION

Assertive Communication

A quick structure for saying what you mean clearly without becoming aggressive, apologizing away your needs, or disappearing.

Assertiveness aims for clarity and respect—not control. Your job is to communicate your position; the other person still gets to choose their response.

Use this four-part formula

1

Describe

State the observable situation without labels: "When plans change after I have already left work..."

2

Express

Name your experience: "I feel stressed and frustrated."

3

Ask

Make one specific request: "Please text me as soon as you know the plan may change."

4

Boundary / next step

If needed, state what you will do: "If I do not hear by 5, I'll assume we are rescheduling."

Keep the message effective

- Make one request at a time.
- Avoid over-explaining until your request disappears.
- A respectful "no" does not require the other person to like it.
- Repeat your core point calmly if the conversation gets pulled into side arguments.

A simple script

"I care about this relationship, and I want to be direct. When ____, I feel _____. I'm asking for _____. If that is not possible, I will _____."

Use this as a flexible guide, not a rule. If a skill increases distress or does not fit your situation, stop and choose a different approach. Bring questions or observations to therapy.

This handout is educational and is not a substitute for individualized mental health care, medical care, or emergency services. If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support.