

#AssertiveWarrior@Home

#WellbeingWarriors

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Quote by Ernest Hemingway: "When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen."

The lockdown may result in a lot of conflict and misunderstandings amongst us all, mostly due to miscommunication. Therefore, learning the skills of being assertive are essential in you becoming a better communicator. When you are being assertive, you can express your opinion in a way that is clear and direct, while still being respectful towards others.

Assertive behaviour can assist in you having your needs better met; reducing conflict; managing anger; and building positive relationships with family, friends, and others. Being assertive is not always easy, and it doesn't come naturally to everyone, but it is a skill that you can learn. Let us start by measuring your current level of [assertiveness](#).

6 Tips for being assertive during the lockdown

1. **Decide to be assertive.** Changing your behaviour is challenging. Still, it is essential to decide and stick to your decision. When you are decisive, you will be valuing yourself and your [rights](#).
2. **Agree to disagree.** Sharing your opinion doesn't mean you are right and the other person is wrong. But it is essential to state your needs and wants confidently. If you disagree with something, state it clearly and with respect. Let's say you disagree with your sibling regarding your study time. This is how you can respond assertively: "I understand that you want to listen to your loud music now, but please note that it is disturbing me while I am studying. How about you use your earphones or listen to your music during your study break."
3. **Be an active listener.** Try to understand the other person's point and wait for them to finish speaking before you respond. Remember to remain open to both criticism and compliments. [Active listening](#) includes using non-verbal behaviour like nodding, smiling and keeping eye contact. Do not assume that you understand, but rather ask more questions before you state your opinion.
4. **Avoid guilt trips.** Being honest and sharing your feelings with others, without accusations or making them feel guilty, are essential in being assertive. Your goal should be free and accurate talk - share your feelings, wants, needs, beliefs and opinions in a respectful manner. Try to be friendlier; remember you are not enemies. Rather than saying: "I want to study now, so get out with your loud music." Instead say: "I prefer studying during this time

because I am awake and energetic, so I would appreciate it if you would use your earphones."

5. **Be patient.** Breathe normally, keep eye contact, relax your face and speak in a normal voice. Remember, you are still going to make mistakes but learn from them. Reflect on your conversation, in that way you will improve daily. If you feel angry and disrespected by another person, to avoid conflict, approach the person in a [non-confronting way](#). Be honest about your feelings regarding their behaviour and acknowledge any mistakes that you may have made.
6. **Practice assertiveness.** Start by speaking assertively in front of a mirror or with a friend. Use '[I statements](#)'. Stick with comments that include 'I' in them such as 'I think' or 'I feel'. Avoid using aggressive language such as 'you always' or 'you never'. Also, take cognisance of your body language and the tone of your voice. Remember... practice makes perfect!

Quote by Stephen R. Covey: "Our ultimate freedom is the right and power to decide how anybody or anything outside ourselves will affect us."

It is important to remember that communication is always a two-way process. It might be easier to be assertive towards your friends, than towards your siblings, or vice versa. Whether it is comfortable or not, an assertive response is always going to be better for you and your relationship with the other person. Being assertive is one step closer to you becoming your best self! Share these tips with your family members during this lockdown, and you can all become better communicators.

Here are some more valuable [assertive communication skills](#) and [tips](#) for you to try.