

# STYLES OF COMMUNICATION

Being an effective communicator takes practice, and it takes self-awareness. By developing an awareness of your own communication style, you can use your communication skills to develop healthy relationships with others and to effectively manage difficult conversations. Here are 3 common styles of communication

## Aggressive

Aggressive communicators will stand up for their own rights but may violate the rights of others while doing so. They will often disregard the feelings, needs, opinions and ideas of others and may convey that these things don't matter. When a person communicates aggressively, it often leads to others feeling resentful toward them.

## Passive

Passive communicators often put the needs of others before their own. They tend to avoid conflict, even if they feel angry or like they have been wronged. This type of communication may sound tentative or apologetic. When a person communicates with a passive style, it often leads to misunderstanding, resentments, and built-up anger because the communicator is not clear about their feelings or their personal boundaries.

## Assertive

Assertive communicators respect their own rights AND the rights of others. They communicate in a way that is direct but not rude or offensive and openly and respectfully state their needs, feelings, and opinions. Assertive communication is the most beneficial type of communication for all parties involved. While communicating assertively does not mean you will always get what you want, it does create the best chance for open discussion and compromise. Assertive communicators understand that being a good listener is an important part of good communication.

One way to approach difficult conversations with assertive communication is to use "I-statements". This type of statement focuses on what **YOU feel**, rather than blaming the other person. This allows the other person to hear your message without feeling like they need to defend themselves. "I-statements" have 4 parts:

1. I feel..... This is the emotion you experience around the event.
2. When..... This is the event itself.
3. Because..... This is your thoughts around the event. What messages are you giving yourself?
4. I'd like..... This is what you need from the situation. You cannot expect the other person to know what you need unless you tell them!

Example: I feel frustrated when I get home and find your things all over my side of the room because I start to think you expect me to clean up your things. I would like it if you could keep your things in your area of the room instead.

Try communicating in an assertive way using "I-statements" the next time you need to have a difficult conversation and notice how the conversation goes. Remember, it's never too late to change the way you communicate!