**Assertiveness**

*Take the following steps to develop your assertiveness.*

**1) Value yourself and your rights**

* Understand that your rights, thoughts, feelings, needs and desires are just as important as everyone else's. But remember they are not more important than anyone else's, either.
* Recognise your rights and protect them.
* Believe you deserve to be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
* Stop apologizing unnecessarily.

**2) Identify your needs and wants, and ask for them to be satisfied**

* Don't wait for someone to recognize what you need, if you do, you might wait forever!
* Understand that to perform to your full potential, your needs must be met.
* Find ways to get your needs met without sacrificing others' needs in the process.

**3) Acknowledge that people are responsible for their own behavior**

* Don't make the mistake of accepting responsibility for how people react to your assertive statements (e.g. anger, resentment). You can only control yourself.
* As long as you are not violating someone else's needs, or behaving in a disrespectful manner, then you have the right to say or do what you want.

**4) Express negative thoughts and feelings in a healthy and positive manner**

* Allow yourself to be angry, but always be respectful.
* Do say what's on your mind, but do it in a way that protects the other person's feelings.
* Control your emotions.
* Stand up for yourself and your rights.

**5) Receive criticism and compliments positively**

* Accept compliments graciously.
* Allow yourself to make mistakes and ask for help.
* Accept feedback positively – be prepared to say you don't agree but do not get defensive or angry.

**6) Learn to say "No" when you need to**

* Know your limits and what will cause you to feel taken advantage of.
* Know that you can't do everything or please everyone and learn to be OK with that.
* Go with what is right for you.
* When possible, suggest an alternative for a win-win solution.

**Assertive Communication Techniques**

*There are a variety of ways to communicate assertively. Adapt the following techniques:*

**1) “I” statements**

* Use "I want.", "I need." or "I feel." to convey basic assertions.

**2) Empathy**

* First, recognize how the other person views the situation, then, express what you need

**3) Escalation**

* This type of assertiveness is necessary when your first attempts are not successful in getting your needs met.
* The technique involves getting more and more firm as time goes on. It may end in you telling the person what you will do next if you do not receive satisfaction. Having said that, remember that regardless of the consequences you give, you may not get what you want in the end.

**4) Ask for More Time**

* Sometimes, you just need to put off saying anything. You might be too emotional or you might not know what you want.
* Be honest and tell the person you need a few minutes to compose your thoughts.

**5) Broken Record**

* Prepare ahead of time the message you want to convey, for example, “I cannot take on any more projects right now.”
* During the conversation, keep restating your message using the same language again and again. Don't relent. Eventually the person is likely to realize that you really mean what you are saying.