

BECOMING ASSERTIVE

DEFINING TERMS

It is important to have a working definition to help direct us in making progress that we can see.

Using a dictionary and with the input of your therapist, define what it means to be:

- A. Passive: _____
- B. Aggressive: _____

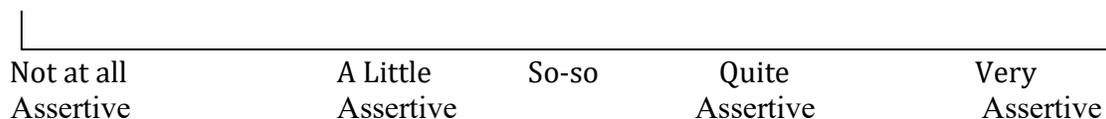
- C. Assertive: _____

ASSESSMENT

- A. Using the above definitions, place yourself on the continuum below using an **X** to mark where you see yourself now and with an **O** to mark where you would like to be.



- B. Now using the definition of assertiveness you developed, rate yourself in terms of being assertive with an **X** and use an **O** to place where you see your parents being.



- C. What would you possibly see as pros or cons of being more assertive?

PROS (e.g., more confidence, know myself better)

CONS (e.g., be disliked, more fights with others)

HELPFUL STARTING SKILLS

- A. *Deep breathing* is very helpful in calming our bodies down when we confront a situation that makes us feel anxious, worries, or fearful. One way of learning to do this is to use your hand (palm down) and imagine it as a slice of pizza, then use your nose to smell it. You want to smell it good, so take as deep a breath as you can and hold it. Slowly let your breath out by blowing it on the slice of pizza to cool it off. Repeat this three times, trying to take a deeper breath each time. Practice this daily for a week at home. (Use a pinwheel to test how well you are doing.) Also ask your therapist about other ways of doing deep breathing (i.e., bubbles, balloons, etc.).
- B. *Eye contact* and *"I" statements*: Making eye contact and by starting our responses/requests of others using "I" statements are effective ways of communicating to others in a direct, assertive way. Practice these skills by completing these statements while looking directly at an object.

I like _____

I wish _____

I believe _____

I want _____

I love _____

I desire _____

AREAS OF ASSERTIVENESS

- A. Giving your opinion:

Using an "I" statement, answer the following:

Which restaurant would you like to go to tonight? _____

What did you think of that movie? _____

How did you like the band? _____

What do you think of our president? _____

Now have your therapist ask these questions to you and a couple of new ones. (Remember to make eye contact as you answer.) Afterwards, process this experience.

Can you think of a situation that is coming up that you would like to state your opinion on?

How could you plan to do this in an assertive way? _____

- B. Accepting positive feedback:

We all need positive feedback and it is polite to receive it in a respectful, assertive manner. Develop with your therapist polite ways to respond to positive feedback about yourself. ___

Using what you have developed above, respond to the following:

You look great today. _____

You did a nice job on your paper. _____

That was a good idea. _____

I appreciated your help today. _____

Now practice by having your therapist give you these compliments plus two new ones. (Remember to make eye contact as you give your response.) Afterwards, process the experience.

During the next week, record all positive feedback you receive and the way you responded to each incident. Then bring the sheet to your next session to process with your therapist.