

Communication, Day 2: Assertiveness

Special Education: Secondary, Lesson # 9

Student Learning Objectives:

To be able to...

1. Decide whether a given communication example is assertive or not assertive
2. Demonstrate assertive body language.
3. Model assertiveness in a given situation.

Materials Needed:

Mirrors(s)
Assertive/not assertive flash cards - one set for each student
Situation cards

Agenda:

1. Define assertiveness
2. Assertive non-verbal communication
3. Assertiveness when asking for what you want
4. Assertiveness in refusals
5. Assertiveness applied

The ability to assert oneself is an important social skill. Requests communicated assertively are much more likely to get a positive response. Similarly, refusals which are expressed firmly will be more likely to be accepted without contest. Assertiveness in communication comes in many forms. Body language, eye contact, how physically close we are to another person, loudness and tone of voice - all are essential to assertive and effective communication.

Activities:

1. Define Assertiveness

- A. Ask students "What does assertiveness mean?"
- B. *"Assertiveness means asking for what you want or giving people an honest no to things you don't want. It means not using other people and not letting yourself be used either."*

2. Assertive Non-Verbal Communication

- A. Remind students of the definition of non-verbal communication (how we communicate without words). Remind students of the different elements of non-verbal communication - body language, eye contact, posture, gestures, etc.
- B. Describe elements of assertive non-verbal communication. Demonstrate them as you describe them.

- direct eye contact
- facing the person you are talking to
- audible, steady, clear voice tone
- sitting up straight or standing tall

- C. Have students role play asking for a pop in front of a mirror. Hand mirrors can be passed around, full length mirror placed sideways can allow several students to do this at the same time, or use the mirrors in the restrooms.

The first time, have them ask for a pop using assertive body language to accompany their words.

The second time, have them ask for a pop without using assertive non-verbal communication.

Point out the differences. Which request is more likely to work?

Repeat the exercise, but this time have them roleplay asking someone to a school dance.

3. Assertiveness when asking for what you want

- A. Discuss with the class that our non-verbal assertiveness is very important, but we must also be

assertive in what we say - the words we choose. In order to communicate assertively, you have to be clear about what you want.

Teacher note: the steps involved in asking for what you want will be learned and practiced by students in a future lesson.

- B. Explain to students that you are going to roleplay asking for what you want in an assertive way and in a non-assertive way. The students' job is to decide whether or not the request was asked assertively. They will hold up the appropriate flash card (assertive or not assertive) to indicate their opinion.

Hand out the flash cards.

- C. Roleplay (or have a teaching assistant roleplay) several of the following situations. Play each situation twice - once with assertive communication, once without. Be sure the contrast is dramatic.

- asking to borrow \$5.00
- asking someone to go to a movie
- asking to change seats at a movie theater
- ordering in a restaurant

- D. After each roleplay ask students whether they thought the request was made in an assertive way or not.

Students will hold up the appropriate flash card.

Discuss each situation. Ask for students' ideas on different assertive approaches to use. Point out that everyone communicates differently. Re-roleplay any good suggestions that students make, so that they can see how they would work.

4. Assertiveness in Refusals

- A. Discuss with students that sometimes, you may be in a situation where you need to say "No". If you can be assertive when saying "No", the person hearing the "No" is more likely to be able to accept the "No" and not persist.

Teacher note: the steps involved in refusals will be learned and practiced by students in a future lesson.

- B. Explain to students that you are going to roleplay saying "No" in an assertive way and in a non-assertive way. The students' job is to decide whether or not the refusal was made assertively. They will hold up the appropriate flash card (assertive or not assertive) to indicate their opinion. Hand out the flash cards.

- C. Roleplay (or have a teaching assistant roleplay) several of the following situations. Play each situation twice - once with assertiveness, once without. Be sure the contrast is dramatic.

- saying “no” when someone wants to borrow \$5.00
- saying “no” when someone asks you to go to a movie
- saying “No” when someone asks you if you want a second helping of dinner
- saying “No” if a stranger asks if you want to take a ride

Create alternative cards that say “Yes” or “No”. Ask students whether they think the approach used is assertive.

- D. After each roleplay ask students whether they thought the refusal was made in an assertive way or not. Students will hold up the appropriate flash card. Discuss each situation. Ask for students ideas on different assertive approaches to use. Point out that everyone communicates differently. Re-roleplay any good suggestions that students make, so that they can see how they would work.

Make sure situations are relevant to specific student interests.

5. Assertiveness Applied

- A. Now it’s time to practice assertive communication. Divide the class into partners or small groups and give each group a different situation card to roleplay and discuss.
- B. Give each group several minutes to discuss their situation and then ask for volunteers to roleplay for the rest of the class. After roleplays are completed, ask students to provide feedback and suggestions for other ways assertiveness could be used in these situations.

Dear Trusted Adult,

In class we talked about assertiveness.

We discussed elements of assertive non-verbal communication.

- direct eye contact
- facing the person you are talking to
- audible, steady, clear voice tone
- sitting up straight or standing tall

We talked about communication that is clear and assertive, and we learned about and practiced making requests and refusals in an assertive way. There are several ways you can support this learning.

- Point out assertiveness when you see it - on television, in situations in the community or at home.
- Model assertive communication and encourage students to use the skills they've been working on when they are making either a request or a refusal.

If you have any questions or comments, please call me.

Sincerely,

Teacher, Principal or Nurse

NOTE: All Trusted Adult Exercises are Optional.

Flash Cards

ASSERTIVE

not assertive

ASSERTIVE

not assertive

Assertiveness Roleplay Cards

<p>The situation:</p> <p>You had a hard day at school and you would like some privacy. Your brother walks into your room.</p> <p>What do you say?</p>	<p>The situation:</p> <p>You were invited to go out with friends, but it's your night to do the dishes and clean your room.</p> <p>What do you say?</p>
<p>The situation:</p> <p>A friend starts telling someone else something you told them in PRIVATE.</p> <p>What do you say?</p>	<p>The situation:</p> <p>Someone cuts in front of you in line at the store.</p> <p>What do you say?</p>