Assertive Communication Skills
Different Communication Styles

- Passive: You step on me
- Assertive: Both are protected
- Aggressive: I step on you
Passive Communication

- I don’t have rights
- Does not respect self
- Exhibits low self-esteem
- Blames others
- Denies or doesn’t express feelings
- Keeps it all in
- I lose-you win
- Controlled by others
Aggressive Communication

- You don’t have rights
- Doesn’t respect others
- Diminishes self-esteem in others
- Blames others
- Expresses own negative feelings
- Lets it all hang out
- I win-you lose
- Controls others
Assertive Communication

- We both have rights
- Takes responsibility
- Expresses feelings in a constructive way
- Win-Win
- Open
- Respects self and others
Effective Assertive Communication Skills

- “You” vs. “I” Statements
  - Always use “I” statements. “You” statements can be perceived as blaming

- Example:
  - You don’t keep me informed.
    - I find it hard to keep up on the project when I don’t have all of the relevant information.
Statements vs. Questions

“You” questions can be perceived as passive aggressive. Convert those questions to “I” statements.

Example

Why do you always arrive late?

I expect you to be on time.
Non-Verbal Body Cues

- Communication is 30% verbal and 70% non-verbal.
- Be conscious of your body language
  - Facial expression
  - Gestures
  - Eye contact
  - Posture, stance and distance
  - Eye-level relationship
## Words to Avoid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Little</th>
<th>Should</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kind of</td>
<td>Make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort of</td>
<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perhaps</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are</td>
<td>Can’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>Just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but…</td>
<td>Must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don’t understand</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Communication Requires Listening

- Use active listening skills
  - Listen for feelings as well as facts
  - Listen for main ideas, disregard sidetracks
  - Listen without interrupting
  - Prepare feedback and paraphrase to ensure accuracy of message received

Listening to hear not listening to speak.
Three-Part Model for Assertive Communication

- Acknowledge the Other
  - What I hear you saying
  - What I see happening
Three-Part Model for Assertive Communication Cont.

- Make “I” Statements
  - I feel...
  - I think...
  - I know...
  - I want...
  - I need...
  - I believe...
Invite Feedback

- I’d like to hear how you feel.
- Do you have any suggestions?
- Are there any other options?
- Tell me what you think.
Summary

- Assertive Communication Skills