

ASSERTING YOURSELF UNDER PRESSURE

ADRN 6212

Course Outline

Description: Assertiveness is not about standing up for yourself at the expense of others, nor is it about compromising your principles to placate others. Assertiveness is about respectful communication and handling potentially stressful situations by design rather than by default. This course will identify the reasons for passive, aggressive and manipulative behaviours and the reasons for such behaviours, and teach assertive behaviours. Participants will have opportunities to practice assertive approaches and apply them to their own work and personal circumstances. By behaving assertively, individuals can be more positive, more creative and better able to get their jobs done effectively.

Course Goals: To provide participants with the concepts and skills to effectively speak up for themselves while remaining respectful of others, including in situations they find challenging.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the difference between aggressive, passive (or submissive) and assertive behaviour.
- Identify three key principles of assertive behaviour:
 - Be honest about what is relevant
 - Stick your bottom line (be prepared to stand up for your interests)
 - Communicate as equals
- Using 'I' statements and other assertiveness tools, communicate with firmness and clarity while remaining respectful. Take your rightful space in the conversation, but leave space for the other person.
- Look inward to appreciate the beliefs and 'old tapes' that interfere with your ability to act assertively. Develop new messages. Consider how one's perspective alters one's reaction and in turn the response one receives from others.
- Use communication skills to 'manage in the moment'. Bring out the best in others and gain understanding of their viewpoint through active listening and questioning skills. Learn to cool other's emotions and increase their receptiveness to your point of view.
- Learn the power of a 'positive no'.
- Integrate and practice the skills of the course through role play and case studies. These can include situations you bring for practice or discussion.

Attendance Requirements:

Students are required to attend 100% of class time in order to receive a completion for this course. A grade report can be printed from myWCS.

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Code of Student Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For the complete Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>.

Evaluation Method:

As part of the course/instructor evaluation, a survey will be sent to you electronically by Continuing Studies. You will be asked the following questions. Please consider these throughout the course.

1. How would you rate your overall experience?
2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:
 - a. The course content was relevant and valuable.
 - b. The instructor conducted class sessions in an organized, well-planned manner.
 - c. The instructor explained concepts clearly.
 - d. The instructor displayed enthusiasm and energy in conducting class sessions.
 - e. The instructor made me feel comfortable in the learning environment.
 - f. The instructor encouraged my participation and interaction.

Course Schedule:

DAY ONE

Welcome, introduction of course, participants and instructor. Confidentiality.

MODULE ONE – Introduction to Assertiveness

Individual Exercise/Reflection

Circumstances in which Assertiveness is Not Called for – When to Avoid or Accommodate

BREAK

MODULE TWO – Winning Yourself A Hearing: How to Make Your Point Without Ticking Off Others

Video 'Assert Yourself'

Discussion of Video.

Assertive Contrasted to Aggressive and Passive

Small Group/Large Group Wall Sort Exercise

'I' Statements

LUNCH

Assertive/Non-Assertive demonstrations by small groups

Other Assertiveness Tools

Confrontation.

Individual Reflection – Record learnings from this unit

MODULE THREE – Managing in the Moment

The Power of Active Listening and Acknowledgment

BREAK

Acknowledgement Exercise – practice active listening in triads

Non-verbal Communication and Perspective Shifts

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MODULE FOUR – Looking Inward
Emotional Intelligence and The Inner Dialogue
Defensiveness
Receiving Criticism, Feedback and Praise
Practice Exercises in Pairs

How Assumptions can Fuel Conflict
Individual Reflection – Record learnings from this unit

Homework: Individual Exercise: self-reflection and self-coaching. Consider what you want to bring to the small group sessions with a coach tomorrow.

DAY TWO

The Power of a 'positive no'
Role Plays in Small Groups with Coach
Overcoming Barriers to Assertiveness – Setting yourself on the path
Recap of Course. Individual Resolve. Evaluation of Course