

# Assertiveness




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## About the Presenter

Angela Heeley is the Mental Health Promotion and Education Coordinator and has worked for CMHAWW for 11 years in a variety of roles, including crisis support, group facilitation, outreach, family education and suicide intervention.




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## Content



- 1 **Aware**  
What exactly is "assertiveness"?
- 2 **Explore**  
Steps to becoming more assertive.
- 3 **Act**  
How to interact and communicate in an assertive manner.

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## Communication Styles

### Passive

- Not speaking up, avoiding conflict

### Passive Aggressive

- Being vague/indirect

### Aggressive

- Putting yourself before others

### Assertive

- Considering yourself and others

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## Passive

- Oftentimes, passive people don't express their thoughts, opinions & needs
- They frequently defer to other people
- "Go with the flow" to avoid conflict, even if there is a problem
- Power differentials may come into play

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- May get "bulldozed" by others (especially those who are aggressive)
- May unnecessarily prolong issues
- May build up resentment
- May feel like we are unworthy and deserve to be invalidated
- May appear to be indifferent

## Passive

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## Passive Aggressive

- May appear passive on the surface, but will begin to act in subtle ways to let out their anger
- Use indirect forms of communication, like facial expressions, gossiping, writing notes, social media posts, expressing concerns to those who can't do anything about it
- May communicate the opposite of what they really think, or be sarcastic

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- May be misunderstood
- People may think you are being authentic when you are not
- May unnecessarily prolong issues
- May lead to the mistreatment of others
- May cause relationship issues

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## Aggressive

- Expressing yourself at the expense of others
- Valuing your rights whilst not valuing the rights of others
- Intimidating, verbally and/or non verbally
- Defensive
- Potentially abusive

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- Alienates others
- Hard for people to approach/help
- May result in serious consequences
  - relationships
  - professional
  - legal

## Aggressive

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## Assertive

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- Honest, direct & respectful
- Confident/conveys self worth
- Effective at getting the point across
- Willing to defend oneself or one's views
- Able to consider constructive feedback

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- Promotes clear communication
- Helps people express their emotions in a healthy way
- Can help resolve issues in a more timely manner
- Can help with setting boundaries
- Some people don't like when people speak up, so may react negatively to people who are assertive.

## Assertive

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Poll Question:

What communication style do you think you use the most?

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### Ask yourself...

- What do I need?
- How might I get it?
- Who might be involved?
- What are some potential obstacles?
- Do I believe my views have value?
- What might happen if I don't speak up?
- Is this a priority?

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Poll Question:

What do you think gets in the way of being assertive?

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## I have the right to...

- express my thoughts/feelings
- make my own priorities
- feel angry & express it responsibly
- be in a non-abusive environment
- not to be responsible for the actions of others
- say "no"
- change & grow
- make decisions
- say, "I don't know"
- be treated with dignity & respect




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## Tips for being Assertive

- Start small
- Plan ahead
- Practice
- Be clear and direct
- Dialogue, not debate
- Avoid over-explaining
- Stand your ground
- Evaluate and re-strategize as needed




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"I messages" are a less threatening way of communicating our views.

"You messages" may feel judgmental and critical.

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I feel/think/need...  
When...  
I would like...  
I will...

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### Non Verbal Communication



#### Face

Expression  
Eye contact  
Gaze



#### Body

Posture  
Stance  
Proximity



#### Voice

Volume  
Tone  
Speed

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"I don't feel comfortable when a conversation turns into yelling. I would like us to speak in everyday voices and have a productive and respectful conversation"

"I've been taking on a lot of extra work lately, and I'd like to talk about my workload and how to make it more manageable".

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"Excuse me; I don't think you noticed that the lineup starts back there".

"I don't understand this policy. I would like to have it explained in more detail. Is there someone I can discuss it with?"

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If you are not used to being assertive, you may have to think about what to say before you speak.

It is a communication skill that can be developed over time.

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What if the person doesn't respond well to my being assertive?



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**Remember,**

Some people may react negatively  
to your assertiveness.

You do not need their permission  
to speak up for yourself.




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**Assertiveness**

Confidence

Communication

Courtesy

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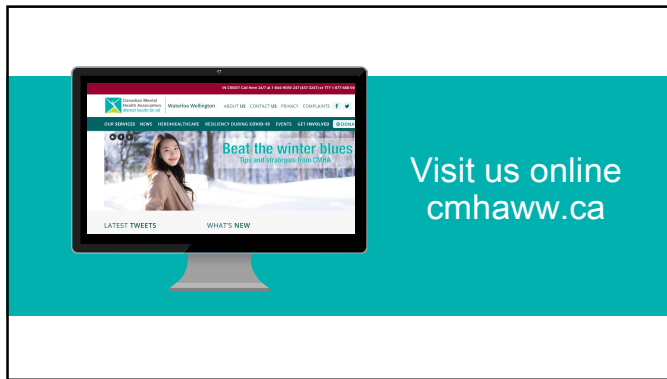
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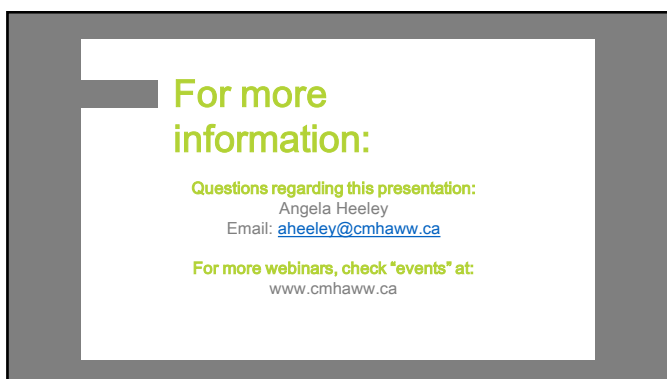
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