

“Wait, What?!” Communication 101

Good communication is an important feature of a healthy relationship. There are four different types of communication: aggressive, passive, passive aggressive, and assertive.*



Aggressive communicators...

- overpower other people and are loud, bossy, and dominating.
- often verbally attack or criticize the other person when confronted.
- blame others and use “you” statements.
- interrupt frequently and do not listen well.
- do not admit responsibility for their part in a conflict.
- convey the message, “I count; you do not count.”



Passive communicators...

- avoid dealing with problems and do not speak up for their rights.
- are often nervous or anxious.
- seem to have little self-confidence, and allow others to walk all over them.
- speak softly or apologetically.
- try hard to please and do not express their feelings, needs, or opinions.
- convey the message, “You count; I do not count.”

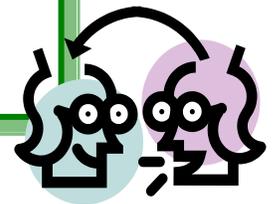


Passive Aggressive communicators...

- do not directly address conflicts, but will “get back at” the person in a sneaky, underhanded way.
- appear cooperative while purposefully doing things to annoy and disrupt.
- are often suspicious or distrustful of others.
- have difficulty acknowledging their anger.
- use sarcasm or facial expressions that don’t match how they feel.
- convey the message, “I count; you do not count; but I make you think that you count.”

Assertive communicators...

- are clear, confident, cool and in control of themselves most of the time.
- stand up for their rights without stepping on other people’s rights.
- speak directly, honestly, and respectfully with a clear speaking voice.
- are able to say “no” to something with which they are uncomfortable.
- are not willing to compromise their own essential values or beliefs in order to make another person happy.
- listen well without interrupting and use “I” statements.
- convey the message, “I count; you count, too.”



Tips for Healthy Communication:



- Use assertive communication tactics.
- Speak with “I” statements. For example, instead of “You’re making me upset,” you can say “I feel upset when you do not respond to my messages.”
- Articulate your needs and wants clearly.
- Respect the person with whom you are communicating.
- Believe that the person with whom you are communicating is telling the truth.
- Ask for clarification about anything confusing.
- Assume good intentions.
- Remember that technology is not always reliable, and the person you’re trying to reach may not have received your message.

* Adapted from Moles, Kerry. 2001. The Teen Relationship Workbook: For Professionals Helping Teens to Develop Healthy Relationships and Prevent Domestic Violence.