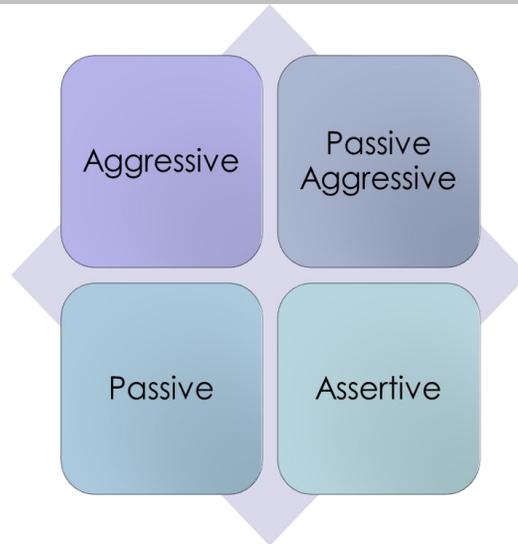


### FOUR BEHAVIORS OF CONFLICT COMMUNICATION



#### 1. Aggressive:

No holding back and verbally or physically pushing others to get what you want.

#### 2. Passive:

You avoid confrontation as much as possible, sometimes sacrificing your needs or desires

#### 3. Passive Aggressive:

Getting what you want in a roundabout way. Or at the very minimum, communicating your feelings indirectly through side-comments or non-verbals (i.e.. rolling eyes). This includes sarcasm.

#### 4. Assertive:

Assertive communication involves asking for what you want or telling people how you feel in a direct but respectful manner.

### THREE STEPS TO ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. Describe the situation as clearly and specifically as you can.
2. Express how you feel about the situation
3. Specify a solution, what you want, and a deadline.

#### Why It's Important:

Learning to be assertive can help reduce passive and aggressive behaviors, and lead to improved — and more positive — relationships. Also, you'll likely notice an improvement in your own self-esteem and confidence.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Below are some general skills related to assertive communication:

- ◆ When describing the situation, use **factual and correct** examples of behaviors that have happened (e.g. "You arrived ten minutes late."). Do not use your opinions about someone's personality or character (i.e. "You're incredibly lazy.")
- ◆ Use "**I-messages**". For example: "You always come late!!" versus "I feel like I can't depend on you."
- ◆ **Tone** is everything. Make sure to use a firm but pleasant tone.
- ◆ **Stay calm**. If you notice you're getting emotionally charged, end the conversation and return to it later.
- ◆ Use **active listening skills** to get a better sense of where the other person is coming from. Avoid making snap judgments and *ask* them about their opinions or concerns with the matter at hand.
- ◆ **Avoid backing down** or changing your mind during the conversation — leading to passivity — unless there is a good reason. And explain *why* you're changing your mind.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here are additional descriptions and skills of items mentioned above:

- Learn about the "[Fogging](http://skillsyouneed.com)" or "[Stuck Record](http://skillsyouneed.com)" technique of assertive communication. ([skillsyouneed.com](http://skillsyouneed.com))
- A thorough explanation of Assertiveness and additional skills such as [dealing with criticism and saying "No!"](http://mindtools.com) ([mindtools.com](http://mindtools.com))
- A step-by-step explanation of "[I-messages](#)"

\*Please use the pdf version on our website to directly link to these resources

## CONTACT US:

Office of the Student Ombuds  
Student Services Building  
Ground Floor, Room G1.404

512 • 471 • 3825

[www.utexas.edu/students/ombuds](http://www.utexas.edu/students/ombuds)



## REMEMBER:

The Office of the Student Ombuds is always available to help you practice these skills and help you think through how you want to approach a difficult conversation. We offer opportunities for **mock discussions**.