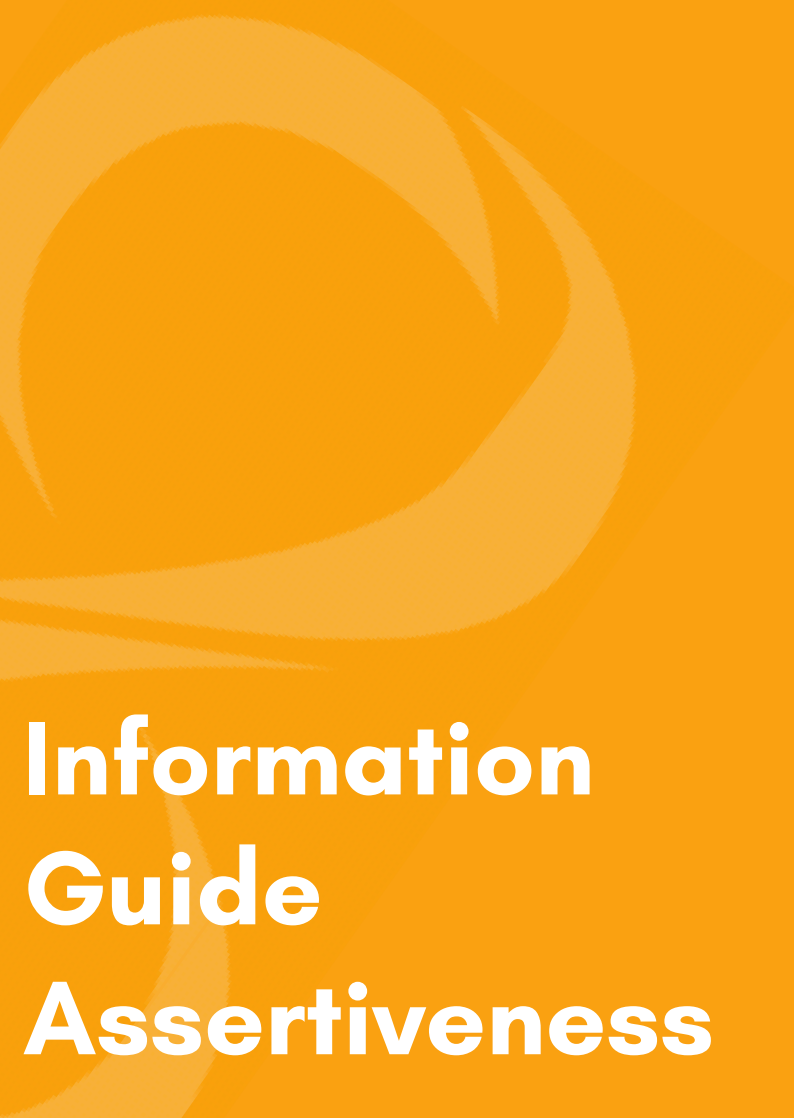




# **Information Guide Assertiveness**

## **What is assertiveness?**

Assertiveness is a communication style. It is being able to express your feelings, thoughts, beliefs and opinions in an open manner that doesn't violate the rights of other people.

Assertiveness is different to confronting someone with anger. Being assertive is respecting yourself and the other person you are communicating with. There is a notable difference between being aggressive and being assertive and this is shown in the words you use, the tone of your voice and your body language.

The effects of not being assertive can lead to low self-esteem, particularly if we always find ourselves agreeing with, and fulfilling other people's needs and wants, rather than also respecting our own. This can result in a feeling of other people being in control of our lives. If we never express ourselves openly and conceal our thoughts and feelings this can lead to us feeling tense, anxious and resentful. This can also lead to unhealthy and uncomfortable relationships.

Assertiveness is recognising that you have your own needs and that it is ok to not have to be obliged or feel guilty or responsible for something you don't want to have to do. Learning that it is ok to say "No" can be very freeing, especially for survivors of abuse who have previously had that option taken away from them or their "No's" ignored. Ultimately, you have the choice as to which situations you choose to be assertive in. Try some of the tips below.

Top tips for being assertive.

1. Keep your statements short, for example;
  - a. "I don't want to"
  - b. "No, I'd prefer not to"
  - c. "I'd rather not"
  - d. "I'm not happy to"
2. Give a reason if you want to but don't make up an excuse.
3. Avoid "I can't", as this sounds like the beginning of an excuse.
4. Don't apologise or say sorry repeatedly
5. Acknowledge an invitation but don't feel pressurised into accepting ie. "thanks for inviting me, but I'd prefer not to."



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