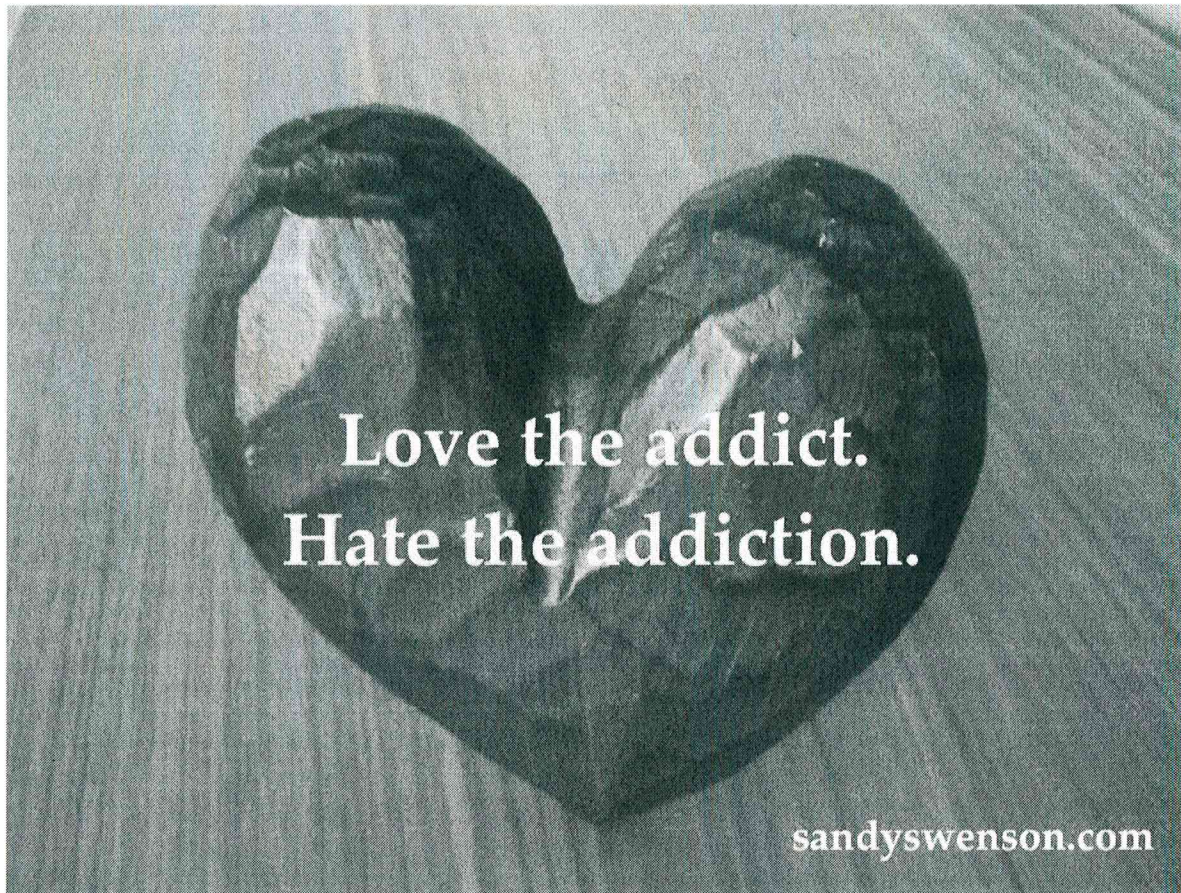


HOW DO I????



Loving someone struggling with addiction is never easy, in this packet you will find helpful tools and information.

What do boundaries have to do with addiction?

Boundaries are key to creating healthy relationships; even when your loved one isn't healthy. Boundaries are key in marriages, friendships, relationships – between you and your parents, siblings, coworkers and more. Think of boundaries a psychological fence between two people: you are not the same person as anyone else, regardless of your relationship. Boundaries establish guidelines for suitable behaviors, responsibilities, and actions.

When your boundaries are weak – or don't exist at all – you compromise what makes you, *you*. Weak boundaries allow you to lose yourself, your freedom, your personal space. Weak boundaries when a loved one is addicted, mean you will likely be lied to, cheated on, and stolen from.

When you set boundaries with an addicted loved one, you increase the chances that he or she will seek help.

Who needs to set boundaries?

You.

Every single person needs to have boundaries within his or her relationships, and if your loved one is addicted to heroin, painkillers, alcohol – or any other drug – you need to establish boundaries. Setting solid boundaries for yourself allows you – the loved one of a drug addicted person – to bring a measure of control and sanity into a chaotic and insane situation.

The following are telltale signs that you need to set boundaries, or strengthen your existing boundaries:

- You bring up what he or she has done wrong in the past
- You send him or her on guilt trips
- You are constantly telling him or her what to do (and warning what will happen if they don't do it)
- You criticize
- You give solutions when you haven't been asked
- You cover for him or her (lied for them, called in sick for work, picked him or her up from the bar)
- You are taken advantage of, or stolen from
- You walk on eggshells to avoid conflict

Establishing Healthy Boundaries

Moving into the new year, it's time to set healthy boundaries. Doing so involves taking care of yourself, understanding your wants and needs, and determining what you don't like, want or need. It also involves clear communication with your loved one.

As situations in each home and relationship can vary, the following boundaries are not a “one-size-fits-all” – but they are a good place to start when deciding how to set boundaries with the addicted person.

“No drugs or alcohol are allowed around me or in the house.”

Let your loved one know what substances are acceptable and unacceptable in the home. Don't want illegal substances like heroin or cocaine under your roof? Let him know. No drinking alcohol when the kids are in the house? Communicate that with her.

Let your loved one understand the consequences if he or she violates those boundaries. Will you force her to find somewhere else to stay if she's been drinking? Will you notify the police if you find heroin in the dresser drawers? Reclaim control over what goes on in your home, within your personal space, and the space around your children or grandchildren.

“No drug-using friends are allowed in the home.”

Just because your loved one may not be using at the time, doesn't mean his or her friends aren't using. If you don't want someone who is high on Oxycontin in your home, then you shouldn't have to put up with that. Laying out such a boundary reduces the damaging effect of addiction on the family.

“If you are arrested, I will not bail you out or pay for a lawyer to defend you.”

This type of boundary will prompt responsibility for your loved one. Although addiction is a disease that needs to be treated as such, there is a responsibility that lies upon your loved one to take care of him or herself by getting help. When you set such a limit, you are letting him know that he is an adult and is responsible for himself. Make it clear that his drug use or drinking is something that must be confronted, but in the meantime, he must conform to the standards of behavior that you expect – and the law requires. “No more insults or ridicule.”

Retain your own values, your plans and your goals. By setting boundaries to eliminate the insults, you no longer sacrifice your self-worth. Reestablish the self-respect and integrity that you hold, and that your family holds by defining what is acceptable language and actions. Don't forget that you have a right to expect decent and respectful behavior from others – including a drug addicted loved one.

“I will not give you any more money – whether it is to pay a bill, buy you food, or put gas in your vehicle.”

Addiction can distort family roles: it turns family members into caretakers, scapegoats, doormats, enablers and pleasers. By setting the boundary to no longer financially support your loved one, you are focusing on your own well-being and mental health. Remember, setting boundaries won't cure the addiction or control an addicted person – but they will protect you. Protect your mental health, your physical well-being, and your finances.

“I will not lie or ‘cover’ for you anymore – regardless of the circumstances.”

Insisting that your loved one act more responsibly will benefit both of you. The disease of addiction thrives in chaos and lies. Set boundaries that will help to remove you from such mayhem, and force your loved one to take ownership in his or her actions and behaviors.

“If you aren’t on time for dinner, you are not welcome to join us.”

With the focus on an addicted individual, family members never put themselves first. If you’re constantly worrying about your loved one and the troubles his drinking or drugging bring onto him or the family – you’re being robbed of your peace of mind. Just as your loved one’s life has been taken over by addiction, so too has that of your family. Set boundaries and take back what is important to *you*.

Setting boundaries is important for both you and your drug or alcohol addicted loved one. With boundaries, you are less likely to become entangled in the chaos of the addiction, you will keep the focus on yourself and your well-being, and get off of the emotional roller coaster rides. Free from the extremes of emotions, you’ll think more clearly, healthy, and rationally, reclaim your self-respect, set healthy examples for your family, and give your drug addicted reason to seek help.

Hold firm in your words and actions, and don’t make idle threats. In time, you may find you rely on your loved one less and less as you continue to stand strong – and eventually, your loved one may be forced to accept responsibility for his or her actions – causing motivation for him or her to seek help and seek change.

Setting Boundaries



Personal boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. A person with healthy boundaries can say “no” to others when they want to, but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to intimacy and close relationships.

Know Your Boundaries

Boundaries should be based on your values, or the things that are important to you. For example, if you value spending time with family, set firm boundaries about working late.

Your boundaries are yours, and yours alone. Many of your boundaries might align with those who are close to you, but others will be unique.

Know your boundaries *before* entering a situation. This will make it less likely you’ll do something you’re not comfortable with.

What to Say

You always have the right to say “no”. When doing so, express yourself clearly and without ambiguity so there is no doubt about what you want.

“I’m not comfortable with this”

“Please don’t do that”

“Not at this time”

“I can’t do that for you”

“This doesn’t work for me”

“I’ve decided not to”

“This is not acceptable”

“I’m drawing the line at ___”

“I don’t want to do that”

What to Do

Use Confident Body Language

Face the other person, make eye contact, and use a steady tone of voice at an appropriate volume (not too quiet, and not too loud).

Be Respectful

Avoid yelling, using put-downs, or giving the silent treatment. It’s okay to be firm, but your message will be better received if you are respectful.

Plan Ahead

Think about what you want to say, and how you will say it, before entering a difficult discussion. This can help you feel more confident about your position.

Compromise

When appropriate, listen and consider the needs of the other person. You never *have* to compromise, but give-and-take is part of any healthy relationship.

Setting Boundaries

Instructions: Respond to the following practice questions as if you were really in each situation. Think about the language *you* would use to firmly state your boundary.

✓ Examples

Situation: You notice your roommate has been eating your food in the fridge. You never discussed plans to share food, and don't want them eating what you bought.

Response: "I'd like to keep our food separate. If there's something of mine that you want, please ask me before taking it."

Situation: Your friend calls you at 11 pm to discuss issues she is having with her boyfriend. You need to wake up at 6 am.

Response: "I can tell you're upset. I want to talk to you, but I need to go to bed. Maybe we can talk tomorrow afternoon."

🎯 Practice

Situation: You invited a friend over for the evening, but now it's getting late. You would like to get ready for bed, but your friend seems unaware of how late it is.

Response:

Situation: A good friend asks you out on a date. You are not interested in being more than friends. You would like to let them down clearly, but gently.

Response:

Setting Boundaries

Situation: You missed several days of work due to a medical condition. When you get back, a coworker asks what happened. You feel this information is personal, and do not want to share.

Response:

Situation: Your brother asks if you can watch his two young children on Saturday morning. You already have plans.

Response:

Situation: Your coworker is upset about their recent performance review. They start yelling and slamming their fist on their desk. This is making you very uncomfortable.

Response:

Situation: A salesperson comes to your door during dinner. You try to politely show disinterest, but they keep giving their sales pitch. You want to get back to dinner.

Response:

Roles the family may take on

The Addicted

The addicted person is the first and most important change in any family role. This person is struggling with substance abuse, which may be alcohol, prescription medication, or illegal drugs. In most cases, this person begins to use to cope with stress, emotions, or pain, which is a form of 'self-medicating'. They use a substance to cope with problems, but as tolerance grows, need more and more of it to achieve the same effects. Eventually they become dependent and begin to develop maladaptive substance use patterns. This can lead to changes in personality, neglecting responsibilities, lying and manipulating, stealing, reckless behavior, self-isolation, anger, and other negative reactions.

The addicted person or persons (there can be more than one of each role in any given family) negatively impacts the rest of the family in every way. However, their impact on the family structure heavily depends on their own role. For example, a caretaker or provider becoming addicted could devastate a family. A child or dependent would cause problems, but nothing so severe.

The Enabler

The enabler takes on the role of the caretaker, either denying the addicts problems, denying the extent of their problems, or lying to themselves with the idea that the person will get better with enough care. Enablers can be spouses, partners, parents, or even children, who either work to convince themselves that the substance abuse is not a problem, or continue to take care of the addicted person, enabling them to continue their substance abuse.

This role changes a great deal depending on the person addicted and the person in the enabling role. For example, a parent or caretaker may become codependent, becoming as reliant on caring for the person as the addict is on their care. Here, the enabler physically enables the addict to continue their addiction by taking care of them, paying their bills or rent, cooking food, lying to friends and family, and otherwise taking steps to hide their addiction from everyone else.

In other cases, enablers can be subtler, but still harmful. A child or stay at home parent can deny that the addiction is a problem, even convincing the addict themselves.

The ScapeGoat

The scapegoat is often blamed for problems, constantly in trouble, and is often heavily influenced to rebel by the dysfunctional family. In many cases, the scapegoat is used by the addict as someone to blame. Scapegoats can include one or more children, a spouse, a close family member, or anyone else in the family who is frequently a part of it.

Roles the family may take on

For example, if someone in the house frequently says things that are blaming another person for their addiction, that person is likely the scapegoat.

- “I wouldn’t drink if Tom didn’t ...”
- “I’ll stop using when Christie learns to control herself”
- “You’re driving me to shoot up. Every time you nag I can’t help it”
- “If you wouldn’t yell so much”
- “Why can’t you just be like you were before”

While it is most often the addict who uses this kind of blame to push their problems off on someone else, this kind of behavior can spread through the family, especially if multiple other people are enablers. Scapegoats can also be quite problematic on their own, and may be rebellious, runaways, highly promiscuous, or even substance abusers themselves as they get older.

The Hero

The Hero can overlap with other roles, but is especially common in children. This person is hardworking and overachieving, and may step up to earn more money, take care of at-home responsibilities, or even help care for siblings when parents or a family member are unable or unwilling. This person fights to bring the family together and create a sense of normalcy.

Again, this role can vary a great deal depending on the family dynamics. A provider may step up to take on household responsibilities and childcare in addition to their job. A homemaker may step up to get a part time job in addition to home responsibilities. An oldest child may work to take care of other children. In every case, the Hero strives to be the good guy, taking care of everyone, always doing the right thing, and somehow ‘rising above’ the dysfunction in the family – for example, to avoid punishment or criticism from a substance using parent, often with the intent of pretending that everything is okay.

Mascot

The Mascot or Family Clown is a frequently recurring role, but not present in every family. Here, the funny person in the family attempts to deflect from the actual problems by being funny or humorous. They use comic relief to pretend that everything is okay, to ease through situations, and to create a sense of normalcy – in much the same way as the

Roles the family may take on

Hero doing the same by trying to make everything okay. Because this role is often taken on by either very young children or emotionally fragile members of the family, it can induce very high levels of stress in the mascot.

Lost Child

Lost children are typically shy, withdrawn, and tend to hide rather than face confrontations or anger. This person is often invisible, hiding or avoiding attention, avoiding the spotlight, avoiding relationships, and often spending time alone as a means of coping.

While most frequently seen in children, the Lost Child can also be a spouse, especially next to a very loud and possibly abusive or dominant substance abuser.

What Is Enabling?

Enabling occurs when the friends and family of a substance user support the addiction through their thoughts or behaviors. People who enable act as a cushion for addicts, preventing them from facing the consequences of their substance abuse. When family members enable their loved one's addiction, they lose respect for themselves, and the substance user loses respect for them. Ignoring the problem or engaging in enabling behaviors makes us lose self-respect because we know we're not doing the right thing. Enabling not only creates a permissive attitude toward drug use, but also gives the addict no desire to seek treatment. Enabled addicts lose faith in themselves and do not respect loved ones who make it easier for them to continue using drugs.

SIGNS OF ENABLING BEHAVIORS FROM FAMILY

Loved ones may enable the addict because they feel responsible for causing the substance use disorder. They often blame themselves for the addiction and try to make up for it by sacrificing time, money and energy. Family members make these sacrifices to reduce their loved one's pain and suffering, but they often don't realize they're engaging in enabling behaviors that are barriers to recovery. Enabling behaviors come in many forms. By recognizing and ceasing these unhealthy behaviors, families can focus on getting their loved one proper treatment.



Denial

Denial is one of the primary behaviors that families adopt when they learn that their loved one is addicted to drugs. They refuse to accept the reality that their family member has a substance use problem. They convince themselves that treatment isn't necessary and the addict will know how to control their drug or alcohol use.



Justification

Justification and denial work hand in hand. Families often reject the problem, making up reasons to justify their loved one's addiction. For example, a family member may feel that it is fine for a loved one to use alcohol or drugs to cope after a stressful day at work. Parents may

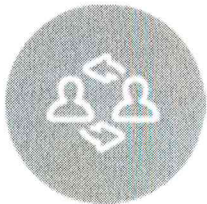
also believe the substance use is only temporary and will stop after a change in lifestyle such as college graduation.

Family members may think that they are controlling the situation if they allow their loved one to use drugs at home. They may even consume drugs or alcohol with the addict to manage their intake level and to make sure they gravitate toward home when using instead of more dangerous locations.



Suppressing Feelings

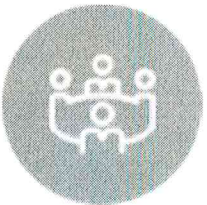
Not expressing your concerns about addiction to a person you love gives them a reason to keep using. In some cases, substance users dismiss their families' fears by reassuring them that they will not consume drugs or alcohol. When an addict dismisses these fears and concerns, it may encourage family members to keep their feelings to themselves.



Avoiding the Problem

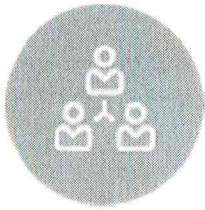
By ignoring the problem and not confronting the substance user, family members may feel that they are keeping the peace in their home. Instead of getting their loved one proper treatment, the family focuses on keeping up appearances to look normal

t. People may be ashamed of their substance-using family member, leading them to portray the person in a falsely positive light to friends, co-workers and acquaintances.



Minimizing the Situation

People surrounding the addict may lighten the issue by convincing themselves that the substance user could be in worse situations. They treat the addiction as a phase that will improve on its own with time and patience.



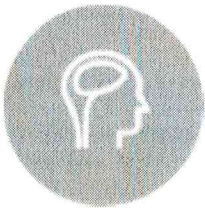
Playing the Blame Game

Adopting negative attitudes toward substance users only pushes those struggling with addiction away. Blaming or punishing individuals for their substance use alienates them from their family, which may result in destructive behaviors.



Assuming Responsibilities

Family members may be inclined to take over the regular tasks and responsibilities of the addict in an effort to prevent their life from falling apart. Instead, assuming responsibilities and providing money to the substance user removes accountability and allows them to fully indulge in their addiction.



Controlling Behaviors

Exerting control on a substance user may worsen their addiction. Constantly treating the addict as an inferior or placing numerous restrictions on their lifestyle may drive them further from the family unit and closer to their substance-using peers.

Enabling examples:

There are far too many people who think they're helping a loved one battle addiction when they are, in fact, just enabling them to continue to use drugs or alcohol. Here are some of the top signs that'll show you're enabling a loved one's addiction as opposed to helping them with it.

1. Make Excuses for Your Loved One

If your loved one has a serious drug or alcohol problem, you might be embarrassed about it and want to hide it from others. As a result, you could find yourself making up excuses for your loved one's behavior or lying on their behalf.

By doing this, you are *not* doing your loved one any favors. You're making yourself look bad to cover their tracks and allowing them to get away with bad behavior without punishment. Instead of making excuses for your loved one, force them to own up to any mistakes they're making in their life due to their addiction. This is one of the only ways that they'll start to understand how their actions are affecting themselves and others.

2. Give Them Money

People who are addicted to drugs and alcohol will do just about anything for money. They'll lie, cheat, and steal to get their hands on the money they need to fuel their addiction.

They'll also often try to prey on family members for money by coming to them with sob stories about how they can't pay their rent or can't afford to buy food for themselves or their families.

If your loved one ever attempts to pull this on you, you're going to feel like you have to reach into your pocket and support them. But know this: If you do, you're likely giving them exactly what they need to go out and buy drugs or alcohol to keep their addiction going. You can't control what else your loved one might do to get the money they need. But you can control your own spending and stop being an enabler by not giving them money when they ask for it.

3. Provide Them With a Place to Live

There are many people—especially parents—who will allow someone who is addicted to drugs or alcohol to continue to live in their home despite their substance abuse issues.

In their minds, these people are protecting their loved ones by preventing them from spending their days and nights out on the streets. But in reality, they're actually enabling them to continue to use drugs or alcohol when they let them live at home while they're using.

If you find out that your loved one is using drugs or alcohol under your roof while they're living with you, tell them you will *not* allow it. Make them choose between either getting help for their addiction or moving out if they want to keep using like they are now.

4. Use Drugs or Alcohol With Them

This should almost go without saying. But if you know someone who is battling an addiction to drugs or alcohol, you should not, under any circumstances, use drugs or alcohol with them.

This will send the wrong message to them since it'll make it seem as though you're accepting their behavior. You should abstain from having even a single beer with someone who has a problem with addiction.

5. Bail Them Out of Tough Spots

Was your loved one just arrested as a direct result of their drug or alcohol use? Your first instinct might be to run right down to the police station and bail them out since you know they probably don't have the money to do it on their own.

There are many people who will take this approach because they feel guilty about leaving their loved one behind bars.

It's OK to feel some sense of guilt in a scenario like this. But it's *not* OK to bail your loved one out time and time again when they find themselves in tough spots due to their addiction. They need to learn to deal with the consequences that come along with their actions if they're going to put themselves into precarious positions by using drugs or alcohol to excess.

6. Fail to Confront Them

Confronting someone about addiction is a hard thing to do. There is a very good chance that they're going to get defensive or even angry if you bring up the fact that they have a drug or alcohol problem.

But you shouldn't allow that to stop you from confronting them anyway. You're going to be acting like an enabler if you decide against doing it.

By confronting your loved one and letting them know that they have a problem, you will, at the very least, plant a seed in their head. It might make them rethink their relationship with drugs or alcohol and force them to reach out to someone about getting the help they so desperately need.

Stop Being an Enabler Immediately

There are all kinds of reasons why a person will turn into an enabler when their loved one is battling addiction.

Some do it because they're scared of what might happen if they mention addiction to their loved one. Others do it because they don't want to hurt any progress that a loved one has made while fighting back against addiction.

Whatever the case may be, you shouldn't allow yourself to become an enabler for your loved one. It's only going to hurt them in the end if you don't come down hard on their addict behavior.

The Four Horsemen & Their Antidotes

The **four horsemen** are behaviors that escalate conflict and damage a relationship. Over time, these harmful behaviors may become a normal part of communication between partners.

Antidotes are skills that replace each of the four horsemen. These skills help resolve conflict and encourage positive feelings between partners.



Four Horsemen



Antidotes

Criticism

Dealing with problems through harsh, blaming, or hurtful expressions of judgment or disapproval.

- Focus is on perceived personal flaws rather than changeable behaviors.
- Often met with defensiveness.

"This kitchen is a mess. You're such a slob."

Gentle Startup

Dealing with problems in a calm and gentle way. The focus is on the problem—not the person.

- Save the discussion for an appropriate time.
- Use warm body language and tone of voice.
- Use "I" statements.

"I feel frustrated when dirty dishes are left in the sink. Could you please do the dishes tonight?"

Defensiveness

Deflecting responsibility for your own mistakes and behaviors, or refusing to accept feedback.

- Making excuses for behavior.
- Shifting blame to your partner.

"It isn't my fault I yelled. You were late, not me!"

Take Responsibility

Own up to your behavior without blaming others.

- Avoid taking feedback personally.
- Use feedback as an opportunity to improve.
- Show remorse and apologize.

"I shouldn't have raised my voice. I'm sorry."

Contempt

Showing anger, disgust, or hostility toward your partner.

- Using putdowns or insults.
- Acting superior to your partner.
- Using a mocking or sarcastic tone.

Share Fondness & Admiration

Foster a healthy relationship by regularly showing each other respect and appreciation.

- Show affection.
- Recognize your partner's strengths.
- Give compliments.

Stonewalling

Emotionally withdrawing, shutting down, or going silent during important discussions.

- Often a response to feeling overwhelmed.
- Used to avoid difficult discussions or problems.
- Underlying problems go unresolved.

Use Self-Soothing

Use relaxation techniques to calm down and stay present with your partner.

- Agree to pause the conversation briefly.
- Use deep breathing.
- Use progressive muscle relaxation (PMR).

Assertive Communication



Assertive Communication: A communication style in which a person stands up for their own needs and wants, while also taking into consideration the needs and wants of others, without behaving passively or aggressively.

Traits of Assertive Communicators

- Clearly state needs and wants
- Eye contact
- Listens to others without interruption
- Appropriate speaking volume
- Steady tone of voice
- Confident body language

Assertiveness Tips

Respect yourself. Your needs, wants, and rights are as important as anyone else's. It's fine to express what you want, so long as you are respectful toward the rights of others.

Express your thoughts and feelings calmly. Giving the silent treatment, yelling, threatening, and shaming are all great examples of what not to do. Take responsibility for your emotions, and express them in a calm and factual manner. Try starting sentences with "I feel...".

Plan what you're going to say. Know your wants and needs, and how you can express them, before entering a conversation. Come up with specific sentences and words you can use.

Say "no" when you need to. You can't make everyone happy all the time. When you need to say "no", do so clearly, without lying about the reasons. Offer to help find another solution.

Examples of Assertive Communication

"I've been feeling frustrated about doing most of the chores around the house. I understand that you're busy, but I need help. How can we make this work?"

The speaker takes responsibility for their feelings without blaming, and clearly describes their needs.

"I won't be able to take you to the airport on Friday. I've had a long week, and I want to rest."

The speaker respects their own needs and wants by clearly saying "no".

"I'm having a hard time sleeping when your music is on. What if you use headphones, or I can help you move the speakers to another room."

The speaker describes their needs, while also considering the needs and wants of the other person.

Assertive Communication

Practice

Tip: Before responding, consider what your wants and needs might be in each situation.

Your Partner: "I know you have plans for the weekend, but I really need you to watch the kids. I have a friend coming to town, and we made plans."

Assertive Response:

Situation: You've just received your food at a restaurant, and it was prepared incorrectly. Your sandwich seems to have extra mayo, instead of no mayo.

Assertive Statement:

Your Friend: "Hey, can I borrow some money? I want to buy these shoes, but I left my wallet at home. I'll pay you back soon, I swear. It won't be like last time."

Assertive Response:

Situation: Your neighbor is adding an expansion to their house, and the crew starts working, very loudly, at 5 AM. It has woken you up every day for a week.

Assertive Statement: