

STYLES OF COMMUNICATION



There are four ways that we usually communicate our thoughts, feelings, and needs to others. These communication styles differ depending on the situation and the person that we are communicating with. Read the definitions below to learn more about the different styles of communication. Which style best describes you?

PASSIVE

Passive communication is when you do not share your feelings with others and you pretend as if everything is OK. For example, if a friend says something to offend you, rather than letting them know, you say nothing at all. You might even laugh along and say that it's not a big deal.

What's wrong with passive communication?

If you're a passive communicator, people might tend to "walk all over you" because they know that you won't say anything or stand up for yourself. Your thoughts and feelings also never get heard since you are not expressing them when they occur. Passive communicators tend to keep their feelings bottled up which can lead to moments of emotional outbursts.

AGGRESSIVE

Aggressive communication is when you express your feelings by trying to hurt others with your words or actions. Aggressive communicators stand up for themselves, but they respond in a way that is rude, disrespectful, or harmful.

What's wrong with aggressive communication?

Being an aggressive communicator can affect your relationships with others. People might not want to be around you because of your response when you become upset or offended. They might feel like they have to "walk on eggshells" when they are around you. Responding aggressively can also get you into trouble at home, school, or in the community.

PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE

Passive-aggressive communication is when you do not share your feelings directly with someone, but instead, you do or say certain things to get back at them or *show* them how you feel without telling them. For example, if someone says something to offend you, you might make a social media post about something related to the issue without ever saying their name.

What's wrong with passive-aggressive communication?

If you are a passive-aggressive communicator, people might have a hard time knowing how you are feeling. You are leaving it up to people to guess instead of just telling them directly. Because of this, it becomes hard to resolve conflict because your passive-aggressive behavior will more than likely anger the other person.

ASSERTIVE

Assertive communication is the best way to express your thoughts and feelings to others. When you are communicating assertively, you are standing up for yourself and sharing your feelings in a kind, firm, and respectful manner.

When we communicate assertively, the other person is more willing to hear what you have to say because you are responding in a way that is not offensive to them. You are also clearly explaining how you are feeling and asking what you need of them. Communicating assertively does not always guarantee that the other person will do what you ask or even listen, but it's the style that gives you the best chance for a positive response.

What changes do you need to make to be a more assertive communicator?

