

Handout M: Tips For Assertive Behavior

- Be direct.** Use clear statements that begin with “I need...”, “I think ...” Don’t minimize your statement by saying, “It’s probably a dumb question, but...”
- Ask questions.** You have the right to get the information you need in a way you understand. Ask the same question again and again, if necessary, until you understand.
- Be firm.** If you don’t understand the choices, ask for more information. If you’re not ready to make a decision, ask for more time. Take as much time as you need to make a decision, and then stick to it.
- Don’t get hurt.** Don’t let yourself be verbally or physically abused. Be direct and firm about your right to be respected. If that doesn’t stop the abuse, walk away.
- Don’t hurt others.** Show respect and listen to others completely without interrupting. You can disagree without insulting the other person. People find it easier to accept your opinion when you show that you heard and respect their point of view.
- Make sure you’ve been understood.** Ask people to repeat what you’ve said.
- Be kind to yourself.** It’s okay to make mistakes sometimes—everybody does.