



Assertive Communication in Neurodivergent Relationships

What is Assertive Communication

Assertive communication is expressing your thoughts, feelings, and needs openly and respectfully while considering the needs of others. It helps build trust, improve relationships, and reduce misunderstandings.

The Three Communication Styles

Communication Style	What It Looks Like	Examples in Neurodivergent Relationships
Passive	Avoiding conflict, not expressing needs, saying "yes" to things you don't want	"I'll go to the party even though I feel overwhelmed."
Aggressive	Expressing needs forcefully, disregarding others, using blaming language	"I can't believe you want me to go! You know I hate loud places!"
Assertive	Clearly stating needs while respecting others, using "I" statements	"I know this party is important to you, but loud environments overwhelm me. Could we go for a little while, or plan a quieter hangout another time?"

Why Assertive Communication Matters

- ✓ Reduces misunderstandings and frustration
- ✓ Helps advocate for your needs (e.g., sensory, emotional, relationship boundaries)
- ✓ Strengthens trust and emotional safety in relationships

Practising Assertive Communication

Step 1: Identify Your Communication Style

Think about a recent situation where you communicated with someone about a conflict or in a tricky situation (e.g., a partner, friend, co-worker).

- Did you avoid sharing how you felt? (Passive)
- Did you react strongly and possibly disregard the other person's feelings? (Aggressive)
- Did you express yourself clearly and respectfully? (Assertive)

 Write about that situation below:


What happened? How did you communicate? How did the other person react?

Step 2: Rewrite It Using Assertive Communication

Take the same situation and rewrite your response in a more assertive way. Example:

✗ Original (Passive) → "It's fine, I don't mind changing our plans."

✓ Assertive Version → "I was really looking forward to our original plan. Can we stick to it, or find a compromise?"

 Now you try: Rewrite your response assertively:

Practising Assertive Communication

Step 3: Practice "I Feel" Statements

Assertive communication uses "I Feel" statements to express feelings and needs without blaming.

Formula: "I feel _____ when _____ because _____. I need/would prefer _____."

Example:

✓ "I feel overwhelmed when plans change last minute because I need time to prepare. I need a heads-up so I can have some time to get used to the idea of the new plans."



Now try writing your own "I" statement:

I feel _____ when _____.
because _____. I need _____
_____.

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Looking for more tools and insights on neurodivergent communication, relationships, and emotional regulation?

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