

## Asserting own wants, needs and feelings

Being clear, firm and direct about what you want or need from others and communicating it unambiguously.

Expressing feelings about what someone has done in a clear, up-front way, in order to build the relationship (e.g. pleased, happy, delighted) or to clear the air (e.g. irritation, anger, frustration).

### Desired outcomes

- ◇ Others are crystal clear about what you want, need or expect of them.
- ◇ Standards of performance, deadlines etc. are made explicit.
- ◇ Others know where they stand with you.
- ◇ Unhelpful feelings are worked through constructively, *not* bottled up or expressed as an 'emotional explosion'.

### Appropriate when

- ◇ You have wants / needs from others that are within their power to deliver.
- ◇ You are clear what an ideal outcome would be and the minimum that would be acceptable to you.
- ◇ The strength of your feelings is getting or might get in the way of moving forward.
- ◇ Your positive feedback might strengthen the relationship or encourage others to behave in ways you like.

### Critical elements

- ◇ Clear, short statements of want or need.
- ◇ Clear, short statements expressing feeling, followed by a description of the behaviour that has triggered your feeling.
- ◇ Knowing your bargaining space i.e. your 'ideal outcome' and your 'bottom line'.
- ◇ Being persistent and standing your ground when necessary, by repeating your want to reinforce how important it is to you.
- ◇ Conceding assertively when not to do so would be inflexible, stubborn or aggressive.

### Example phrases

#### *Expectations:*

'Would you mind...?', 'I'd be grateful if you would...'

'I'd like you to...?', 'I need you to...'

'I want you to...?', 'I expect you to...'

'I insist that you...?', 'You must'...

#### *Persistence:*

'I do understand that you...(empathy), however, I do want you to...(restate want).

#### *Concession:*

'OK, I do understand that you can't...I am prepared to be flexible, so I'd like you to...'

*Feelings:*

'I'm starting to feel (e.g. frustrated) about (the situation) because (description of the others' behaviour)'

'I am (e.g. annoyed / delighted) with the way you (description of behaviour)'

'Yesterday when you (description of the behaviour) I felt...'

## Non-verbal backup

- ◇ Strong eye contact, especially at the start and at the end.
- ◇ Holding eye contact for a few seconds after finishing speaking.
- ◇ Solid, well-planted posture, two feet on the floor, weight evenly balanced between them.
- ◇ Straight back, upright posture.
- ◇ Firm chopping gestures, open palms.

## What can go wrong?

Too little, and you may appear tentative, or your expectations may be unclear...



Too much, and others may find you overbearing...

