

Teach negotiation and assertiveness skills

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Supporting language and communication skills' from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

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- Includes:**
- Teach how to use an I-message
 - Explore ways to respond
 - Provide an assertiveness model
 - Provide a negotiation model
 - Reflective questions
 - Useful resources

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Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Supporting language and communication skills](#)

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Teach how to use an I-message

An I-message is a de-escalation strategy that supports self expression and conflict resolution.

Instead of saying: “You stole my pencil” or “Give me back my pencil”... try an I-message:

- I feel anxious that I won’t be able to finish my work on time when you borrow my pencil
- I would like you to give me back my pencil.

Practice by writing or performing short plays, drawing cartoons, making posters, writing dialogue.

Visit [I-messages](#) to find more information and posters to support student use of I-messages.

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Explore ways to respond

Provide multiple opportunities for students to explore and discuss situations they find challenging.

Visit [Enhancing relationships: Being assertive](#) for more activities.

Activity 1

Students could brainstorm situations where their rights have been challenged, such as when another student queue-jumps or keeps interrupting them when they're working.

Students discuss their reactions to each of these situations and identify the three different ways that people deal with a challenge to their rights: passively, aggressively, and assertively.

Activity 2

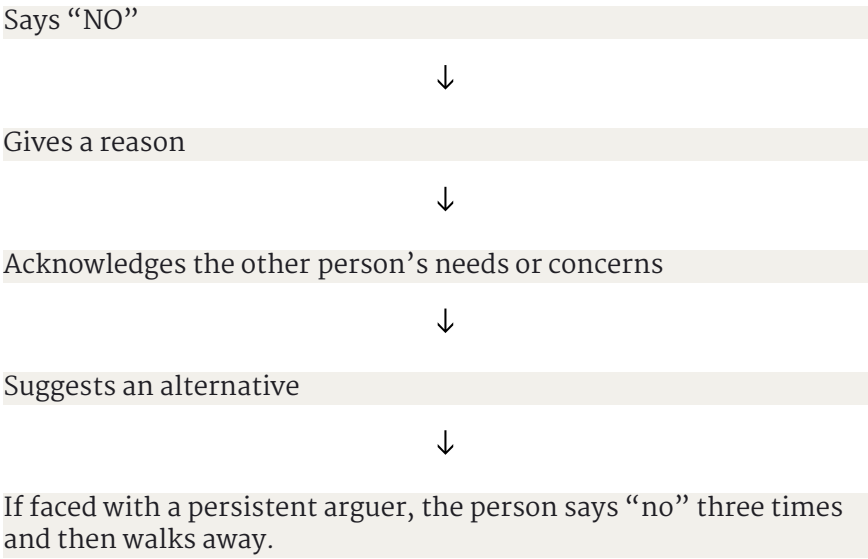
Discuss and demonstrate, for example, through role-play:

- passive response (keeping the head down, looking and sounding timid, and making no eye contact)
- aggressive response (using a loud voice and physical force, glaring, using put-downs, and making threats)
- assertive response (making eye contact, speaking firmly but pleasantly, and making clear statements).

Provide an assertiveness model

Use a range of options such as role play, puppets, or comic strips to practice using the assertiveness model.

An assertive person:



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Provide a negotiation model

Introduce students to this negotiation model and practice using it with a range of scenarios relevant to the students.

Example scenarios

- A wants to go to the beach. B wants to see a movie.
- A wants B to clean up the bedroom. B likes it the way it is.

Negotiation model

1. Preparation: Both sides decide separately on three outcomes: the best, an acceptable outcome, and the worst outcome they could accept.
2. Discussion: One side at a time describes the facts, thoughts and feelings from their perspective. Questions can be asked to clarify understanding.
3. Proposal/counter proposal: One side makes an offer or request. The other side makes a counter offer or request. Repeat this process aiming for a compromise.
4. Agreement/disagreement: If there is still disagreement, return to step 1 and repeat.

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Reflective questions

Adapt for your own context.

In what areas of your regular programme could you focus on building students' assertiveness and negotiation skills?

Are you modelling effective assertiveness and negotiation skills in your own practice?

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Useful resources



Enhancing relationships: Being assertive

Learning activities to promote appropriate responses to challenging situations.

[Visit website](#)



I-messages

Definition of I-message that can be used as a strategy to reduce conflict.

Publisher: Goalbook

[Visit website](#)

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